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**THE EVOLUTION OF ISRAELI CIVIL-MILITARY  
RELATIONS: DOMESTIC ENABLERS AND THE QUEST  
FOR SECURITY**

by

Alan Weinraub

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Thesis Advisor:

Second Reader:

Daniel J. Moran

Glenn E. Robinson

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DOMESTIC ENABLERS AND THE QUEST FOR SECURITY**

Alan Weinraub  
Lieutenant, United States Navy  
B.A., Towson University, 1995

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December 2009**

Author: Alan Weinraub

Approved by: Daniel J. Moran  
Thesis Advisor

Glenn E. Robinson  
Second Reader

Harold A. Trinkunas, PhD  
Chairman, Department of National Security Affairs

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## **ABSTRACT**

For 61 years, Israel has confronted intractable external hostility that has tested the mettle of its democratic foundation and institutions. Its effects are particularly pronounced with respect to the relationship between the country's civil and military spheres. Unlike other contemporary Western democracies, Israel has embraced an arrangement whereby the normally distinct boundaries separating government, military and society have been allowed to become blurred. While the Israel Defense Force (IDF) remains officially subordinate to elected leadership, and the likelihood of its intervention in Israeli politics remains exceedingly remote, its pervasive influence on policy formation and implementation is distinctive and troubling to some. As the direct threat to Israel's existence has receded, the IDF has begun to shed its identity as the embodiment of the nation-in-arms in favor of a new emphasis on military professionalization. It remains to be seen what impact this will have on Israeli society, its sense of security, and its view of military institutions. It is safe to assume, however, the changing social attitudes will continue to shape the state's often obscure civil-military dynamic, which will, in turn, help to define the prospects for cooperation, stability and regional peace.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

CGS	Chief of the General Staff
CINC	Collective Commander-In-Chief
DEFMIN	Defense Minister
FADC	Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee
FORMIN	Foreign Minister
IDF	Israel Defense Force
MDC	Ministerial Defense Committee
MIC	Military-Industrial Complex
MID	Military Intelligence Department
MOD	Ministry of Defense
NEP	New Economic Policy
NSC	National Security Council
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PM	Prime Minister
PR	Proportional Representation
R&D	Research and Development

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Sixty-one years after Israel's founding, the nature of its civil-military relations continue to reflect and define the state's character, affecting the formulation and implementation of strategy and security policy. Based on a uniquely balanced, 3-legged model comprised of: 1) a freely elected civilian government, 2) broadly empowered security apparatus, and 3) semi-militarized populace,<sup>1</sup> Israel constitutes one of only two democracies in the Middle East.<sup>2</sup> While the military sphere remains formally subordinate to elected leadership, a blurring of boundaries and development of de facto partnership with the elected government is unique among contemporary democracies.<sup>3</sup> Despite Israel's unwieldy relationship between, 1) its core societal elements and 2) senior civil-military elites, the decision-making system continues to function effectively in response to short-term/operational matters, exhibiting no signs of either imminent deterioration or military intervention.

### A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

The primary motivation of this thesis is to explore the evolution of the civil-military relations in Israel, with particular interest focused on, 1) the post-1967 War timeframe and 2) the key domestic actors who comprise the system. As the level of conventional threat to Israel has receded, the interrelationship of Israel's three spheres (government, military and populace) has evolved in response to emerging asymmetric dangers. It is unclear how (or if) this unique dynamic can keep pace with changes to both Israeli society and the nature of threats confronting it. At a minimum, it is worth

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<sup>1</sup> Yoram Peri, "The Political-military Complex: The IDF's Influence over Policy towards the Palestinians since 1987," *Israel Affairs* 11, no. 2 (2005): 328.

<sup>2</sup> Mehran Kamrava, "Military Professionalization and Civil-military Relations in the Middle East," *Political Science Quarterly* 115, no. 1 (2000): 70. Kamrava refers to Israel and Turkey as "military democracies," featuring "regular meaningful elections, vibrant party systems and genuine input by the electorate into the political process."

<sup>3</sup> Eva Etzioni-Halevy, "Civil-military Relations and Democracy: The Case of Military-political Elites' Connection in Israel," *Armed Forces and Society* 22 (1996): 401. Israel...had developed Civil-military relations that differ from those of other democracies in that Israel lacks the separation between the government/political elite and the military elite."

considering whether the system's post-1967 evolution is consistent with the continued stability of Israeli democracy, and what effect it has on future policy formulation and implementation

## B. IMPORTANCE

Israeli civil-military relations exhibit the paradoxical characteristics of a democratic society, which has willingly accepted military primacy over significant elements of state policy and direction. Subjected to intractable conflict and faced with the pervasive threat of violence, the Israel Defense Force (IDF) emerged as the guarantor of Israel's survival, establishing its mystique, prestige and positive reputation domestically.<sup>4</sup> Coupled with a hopelessly fractious parliamentary system,<sup>5</sup> and a populace instilled with a high notion of civic duty and patriotism, Israeli society has developed a dependency on physical security and government-military cooperation as the bedrock of survival. While policy fluctuates according to the political parties and key personalities in power, the ambiguous relationship between the Prime Minister (PM), Defense Minister (DEFMIN) and IDF Chief of the General Staff (CGS) remains the key obstacle in charting clear, effective policy boundaries.<sup>6</sup>

Whereas the state's founders labored to establish a hierarchy under which the military sphere remained subservient to elected civilian leadership, there has been perennial concern that the nature of this relationship has altered over time (notably, in the

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<sup>4</sup> Metin Heper and Joshua Itzkowitz-Shifrinson, "Civil-military Relations in Israel and Turkey," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 33, no. 2 (2005): 231. "For Israelis, armed conflict became the ultimate method of resolving the issue of their state's disputed existence."

<sup>5</sup> Charles D. Freilich, "National Security Decision-making in Israel: Processes, pathologies, and strengths," *The Middle East Journal* 60, no. 4 (2006): 639–640. According to Freilich, "The single most important structural determinant of Israel's national security decision-making process is the PR electoral system and the consequent need to govern through coalition-cabinets." Given low threshold requirements for party participation, smaller movements wield disproportionate influence, resulting in a governmental focus on coalition management, vice policy formulation. As such, the IDF has interjected itself into the vacuum to drive security considerations.

<sup>6</sup> Peri, "The Political-Military Complex, 335"; Amir Bar-Or, "Political-military Relations in Israel, 1996–2003," *Israel Affairs* 12, no. 3 (2006): 365–366. The informal relationship between PM, DEFMIN and CGS has never been adequately or legally defined. While the arrangement may have the outward façade of stability, particularly with regard to Israel's civil-military partnership, cracks in the veneer have become increasingly common over the past 15–20 years. This has resulted in numerous political squabbles between the various personalities involved.

years since the 1967 War). Rather than formalizing roles and assigning responsibility through a legal framework, the subsequent practice of hierarchy via custom and tradition contributed to blurred inter-domain boundaries. This resulted in a cooperative, if nebulous, process whereby the defense establishment fills a recognized policy vacuum by functioning as de facto formulator/developer. Owing to, 1) its unrivaled expertise on security matters and 2) the historical prestige and high regard afforded the IDF domestically; this default arrangement has been readily accepted by society as the most effective means of assuring national security.

Due to the reduction in conventional threat since the 1978 Camp David Accords, coupled with Israeli society's gradual Westernization (i.e., in terms of military tactics and technology, economic privatization and globalization, culture, etc.), the question of where the state's civil-military relations are heading looms large. Will the security establishment continue to exercise de facto hegemony over security and strategic policy issues, or will elected government re-assert its authority over the process by establishing a relevant civilian policy infrastructure? Will the move toward a more "professional" military divorce the IDF from its roots as a mass-based, popular institution, and what effect could this have on its relationship to both government and society?

How this situation plays out is not only domestically relevant within Israel, but has larger implications for the possibility of future resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (and by extension, U.S. policy in the region). To interact effectively with the Jewish State, Western leaders need to understand the nuances, intricacies and priority drivers of Israel's civil-military dynamic, as there exists a distinct departure from the traditional separation of the two domains (where subordination and professionalism are the accepted norms). Only in this manner can greater cohesion in regional policy coordination (and hopefully peace) be attained. This study is designed to provide an overview of the manner in which the development of civil-military relations can be defined based on the confluence of historical, cultural and economic factors.

## C. FINDINGS

While the nature of the Israeli civil-military model is certainly, 1) unique and 2) a deviation from traditionally accepted Western notions regarding involvement of the armed forces in political processes and policy formulation, in this case it appears to be reasonably effective under the given set of circumstances. By examining Israel through an extensive historical case study and tracking the maturation of domestic components, it becomes apparent that the system's weakness has been mitigated through, 1) semi-effective inter-sphere coordination and 2) the mobilization of quantitatively inferior manpower and arms in defense of the state. This was highlighted during 1967's lightning campaign, where IDF policy control (focused on the operational level) lead to gains well beyond initial government goals. The luster was short lived, however, a function of subsequent diminished military performance (1973, 1982, and operations in the Occupied Territories) and the shift of society toward a mindset placing greater emphasis on individualism, in lieu of collectivism, nationalism and patriotism. The latter has had a significant impact on checking the potential for runaway military influence, as pluralism and free elections tend to assure a referendum on policies swaying too far from the center toward either extreme.

The nature of the IDF's development has also played an important role in its relationship with the elected government. Israel's founder/first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, sought to assure a strong, stable civilian control of the military by combining the portfolios of PM and DEFMIN in his own hands. His strength of character assured civil dominance during the formative years,<sup>7</sup> but by the mid 1960s, the two roles were split, leaving the latter with little true authority over operational forces or decision making.<sup>8</sup> This facilitated a creeping encroachment by the IDF into the political domain, whereby partisan differences regarding the peace process increasingly tainted military

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<sup>7</sup> Bar-Or, "Political-military Relations in Israel, 1996–2003," 375; Ze'ev Schiff, "Fifty Years of Israeli Security: The Central Role of the Defense System," *Middle East Journal* 53, no. 3, *Special Issue on Israel* (1999): 435–436. Ben-Gurion firmly believed "the Army determines neither the policies, administration, nor the laws of the state...The army is nothing more than the executive arm for the defense and security of the State of Israel...The army is unconditionally subordinate to the government."

<sup>8</sup> Bar-Or, "Political-military Relations in Israel, 1996–2003," 375. According to Bar-Or, the only true "civil supremacy" over the IDF existed under Ben-Gurion's administration.

policy and strategy through the 1990s (and to the present).<sup>9</sup> Over time, it became clear that excluding the military from politics and policymaking was simply unworkable, as the organization functioned as the public domain's sole repository of staff and strategy experience.<sup>10</sup>

By the late 1980s, the IDF itself became the primary driver behind the peace process, convinced it was the only means of assuring long-term security. This reflected the changing dynamic of both global and regional conditions: 1) the Cold War's end, 2) longer-ranged weapons in the hands of distant enemies, and 3) the difficulty in suppressing the First Intifada (1987–1989).<sup>11</sup> There was a pragmatic realization that military solutions alone were no longer effective in assuring safety, and according to Yitzchak Rabin, “Israel cannot enforce peace accords it favours (contingent on) the defeat or conquest of Arab States. This is an unpleasant state of affairs, but it is how things stand.”<sup>12</sup> As such, the IDF became increasingly involved in external policy negotiation and implementation (via planning and intelligence functions). It also began gradually shifting force structure away from a conscription-based, popular organization to a smaller, more professional model. By the late 1990s, however, renewed violence associated with the Second Intifada (2000–2004/5) lead to a further reversal in the IDF’s position. Military leadership adopted a kinetic force approach to combating the insurrection, and was concerned by what they saw as government inconsistency on the

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<sup>9</sup> Heper and Itzkowitz-Shiffrinson, “Civil-military Relations in Israel and Turkey,” 231. According to Heper and Itzkowitz-Shiffrinson, “The nature of Israeli politics was...irrevocably intertwined with defense matters as well as foreign policy issues.”

<sup>10</sup> Peri, “The Political-military Complex,” 330; Freilich, “National Security Decision-Making in Israel: Processes, Pathologies, and Strengths,” 641–642. Freilich states, “policy planning and formulation capabilities in the civilian national security bureaucracies remain weak....Only the IDF has a highly effective policy formulating mechanism.”

<sup>11</sup> Peri, “The Political-military Complex,” 325. “In order to enhance preparedness for a possible confrontation with ‘second circle’ states, Israel would need to reach a political accommodation with its ‘first circle’ neighbours even at the cost of territorial assets.”

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 327, 338. According to Peri, “The IDF came to realize that it would be worthwhile ceding territory in order to change the status quo and attain a political agreement with Syria, Jordan and the Palestinians.” This positional shift was a function of realism (vice altruism), and is evident in viewing peace “not as a primary goal in itself, but first and foremost as a means of attaining security.”

issue (negotiating and contemplating withdrawals during “combat”).<sup>13</sup> This has contributed to the inability of successive Israeli governments to develop and/or implement effective policies relating to peace negotiations.

While some will question the close ties and fragmented boundaries between the government and security spheres as anathematic to proper civil-military relations, there has never been an overt challenge to civilian supremacy. The likelihood of military intervention into the political domain is exceedingly small. The IDF appears to remain focused on the professionalization of its force structure in the face of consistently shrinking budgets, but it remains unclear how this shift from the nation-in-arms model will eventually affect the armed forces relationship with both government and society.

This study’s goal is to analyze the development of Israeli civil-military relations to understand how a society adapts its domestic characteristics and methodologies to meet the threat of ongoing hostility and violence, while remaining democratic in nature. While it does not attempt to project future developments, there are certainly trends that can be extrapolated. First, Israel remains a pluralistic democracy challenged by ongoing conflict. Second, Israel’s development was explicitly influenced by its security dilemma. Third, Israel continues to rely on a uniquely hybrid arrangement whereby civil and military spheres function as a de facto partnership. Finally, continued Westernization and Globalization will directly impact the character of its security establishment (to include its larger role within society).

#### **D. HYPOTHESIS**

The nature of power sharing and influence within the Israel, especially between the armed forces and government, underwent significant change in the years following the 1967 War. This process, highlighted by the diminished military performances in 1973, 1982, and both Intifadas, was accelerated during the historic 1977 election defeat of the MAPAI/LABOR coalition. As a result of: 1) the end of MAPAI/LABOR

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<sup>13</sup> Peri, “The Political-military Complex,” 334. “Just as at the beginning of the 1990s the military had shown a willingness to make far-reaching concessions in order to reach a settlement with the Palestinians, at the end of the 1990s it pressed for severe measures to counter the second intifada.”

hegemony, 2) a divergence in perspective on national security, and 3) the growth of Israel into a sophisticated economic engine, the IDF has come to play an ever more pervasive role in policy formation. This is a direct contradiction to the aspirations of Israel's founding fathers. That said, despite fluctuations in policy focus and direction within both civil and military domains (the result of ebbs and flows of parties and personalities), the system's basic structure has remained inherently intact. Israel remains a stable democracy, with formal military subordination to civilian leadership precluding any potential for overt intervention by the IDF into the political domain. While the cooperative nature between the two spheres blurs traditional democratic boundaries, and the armed forces exert significant influence in policy determination, the model appears to function adequately in addressing the Jewish state's short-term security requirements.

## **E. OVERVIEW**

Chapter II discusses overarching theoretical concepts and models relevant to the study of civil-military relations. Particular emphasis is placed on the notions of: 1) boundaries and the separation of government and security domains, 2) the effect of professionalization on the armed forces, 3) societal militarism and the “nation-in-arms” construct, and 4) subjective versus objective means of control. The academic community itself has adopted a variety of (often-conflicting) positions relating to the notion of what constitutes effective and desired civil-military relations. While Huntington's premise on the desirability of military separation from/subordination to civilian authorities has long stood as the gold standard, it has come under increasing scrutiny over recent years, particularly concerning Israel itself.

Chapter III examines the three domestic societal enablers, which play key roles in Israeli civil-military relations: 1) the fragmented nature of Israel's political system, 2) the militarization of society via universal conscription, and 3) an autonomous and powerful military-industrial complex, a result of Israel's economic development. The former results from a PR system which sets the threshold for Knesset participation too low, thereby resulting in an unwieldy coalition system highlighted by a large number of political parties. The middle results from a 3-tiered military model where a large reserve

component is utilized to complement the small professional and conscript force in the event of crisis. In this manner, reservists' unique connection to society allows for the two-way transmission of both military and civilian values between the spheres. The latter is a function of Israel's determination to avoid over-reliance on foreign sources for arms. While such autonomy was at the crux of early policy, growing U.S. economic and military support has altered the nature of the Israeli military-industrial complex. This was coupled with a determined effort to move away from a statist economic system, with an increased emphasis on privatization and reduced public sector spending since the mid-1980s.

Chapter IV discusses the early foundation of civil-military relations in Israel, from the period of state formation (1948) until 1967's Six Day War. It focuses on the desire of the Jewish State's founding fathers to establish and maintain civilian control over the military. While such control was initially enacted, the eventual retirement of Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, coupled with a less resolute successor (in the person of Levi Eshkol) allowed for the separation of PM and DEFMIN portfolios (which Ben-Gurion had held himself) and the interjection of the IDF into policy-related decision making. Wildly successful operations during the 1967 conflict only served to cement the prestige of the armed forces, which could do no wrong in the eyes of the Israeli public.

Chapter V examines the aftermath of the 1967 war, with particular emphasis placed on, 1) declining public perception of the IDF and 2) growing activism exhibited by certain senior IDF leaders. While attempts were made to define the roles and boundaries of the military domain more effectively, most fell short because of political interference and/or lack of will. Instead, CGS's became more prominent in their ability to both speak out publicly and drive policy/budget considerations. Additionally, the twin phenomenon of, 1) political courting of military officers and 2) "parachuting" from military to political careers became increasingly common (particularly after HERUT/LIKUD's momentous election victory in 1977).

Chapter VI follows the progression of civil-military relations from the Cold War's aftermath through the Oslo Peace process and into the present. Primary focus is levied on the IDF's role as supporter of peace during the early 1990s (as a means of attaining

security), followed by a drastic shift toward direct application of force to crush popular Palestinian uprisings by 2000 (a direct result of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Intifada). While a disproportionate number of PMs during this timeframe were former military, and the jump from retirement to political leadership became increasingly routine, there remained a deep divide in policy making between government and the IDF (highlighted by increased friction during the first Netanyahu administration). Fluctuation in the nature of personalities at the highest levels, coupled with difficulty in formulating effective strategic policy, continue to reinforce the strength of both boundary fragmentation and military involvement in the process.

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## II. CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS THEORY

The relationship between civil and military domains is a crucial factor in the governance of democratic societies. According to Peter Feaver, the inherent paradox in civil-military relations is “the need to have protection *by* the military and the need to have protection *from* the military.”<sup>14</sup> While the traditional Western model elaborated by Samuel Huntington in 1957 promotes the rigid separation of the spheres as a means of assuring proper balance and military subordination, Israel’s distinctive arrangement came into being (and subsequently developed) based on the immediacy and necessity of survival. It simultaneously combined both security and policymaking in the face of intractable threat, morphing into a unique societal arrangement whereby the borders between the two have become blurred. While academic viewpoints over the years have fluctuated regarding the concepts of domain boundaries, military professionalism and the effects of militarism on society, the Israeli experience remains paradoxical. It does not neatly fit neatly into the paradigms of either Western or emerging societies, owing to inherently close ties between civil society, the military apparatus and the political elite. In spite of it all, for 61 years, the Jewish state has managed to function as a democratic system.

### A. DEFINITIONS

The following are a list of basic terms, which are necessary for understanding the foundation of civil-military relations.

- **The military:** According to Samuel Finer, modern militaries are cohesive and hierarchical.<sup>15</sup> Armed forces are purposive instruments who tend to be far more rigidly organized than any other state-level entity.<sup>16</sup> They are

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<sup>14</sup> Peter D. Feaver, “The Civil-military Problematique: Huntington, Janowitz, and the Question of Civilian Control,” *Armed Forces and Society* 23, no. 2 (1996): 154.

<sup>15</sup> Samuel E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 6–13.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 12. According to Finer, the military is defined by: 1) centralized command, 2) hierarchy, 3) discipline, 4) intercommunications, and 5) esprit de corps. They are also a “continuing corporation with an intense sentiment of solidarity....This formidable corporate body is more lethally and heavily armed than any other organization in the state.”

seldom the recipient of universal love or respect from civil populations, and their ability to focus on anything beyond operational environments or primitive governing (resulting from intervention or occupation) is limited. Additionally, while most (or perhaps all) security organizations view themselves as the protectors of national interests, they lack the legitimacy to rule unilaterally, and may conceive or prioritize those interests differently from the rest of society.<sup>17</sup>

- **Professionalism:** A sociological and analytical construct that can be applied to the officer corps. In the case of civil-military relations, it is defined by three primary dimensions: 1) educational expertise, 2) a sense of service and responsibility to society based on higher principles, and 3) a sense of corporate identity that sets the organization apart from outsiders/the remainder of society.<sup>18</sup> Samuel Huntington and Morris Janowitz articulated two influential theories relating to professionalism. The former, prominent during the early Cold War years, viewed the officer corps through the prism of potential *total* conflict. The goal was to assure the security sphere remained benign in the civil-military relationship by removing the possibility of it being drawn into politics. As such, the proscribed course of action was to separate the military from society to both maximize its martial capabilities and assure it remained subservient to the state.<sup>19</sup> Janowitz, in contrast, argued that as the threat of mutual annihilation decreased, the military began to shed its corporate distinctiveness and re-connect with society. This process gradually eroded the inter-domain gap, so that professionalism and discipline have given way to increasing pragmatism and a *management* process.<sup>20</sup> While he concurs there remains a need for military subservience to civilian leadership, closer ties between the armed forces and society are generally a good thing from his perspective, since the subordination of armed forces to civil authority is strengthened if the trends and attitudes prominent in society are reflected in the military.

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<sup>17</sup> Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*, 14, 17–21, 35–37.

<sup>18</sup> Bernard Boene, “Western-type Civil-military Relations Revisited,” in *Military, State and Society in Israel: Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*, ed. Daniel Maman, Eyal Ben-Ari, and Zeev Rosenhek (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2001), 52–53. It is Boene’s contention that this development “made it possible to think in terms of military autonomy and Civil-military coordination, while preserving the principle of military subordination to the civil power.”

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 53–56. The assessed fault of this school of thought was that, 1) distinct separation may remove the military’s knowledge of/regard for political considerations associated with conflict, and 2) there is the possibility (however slim) that militaristic/nationalistic trends within society could be transmitted *to* the armed forces.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 56–60. Societal changes played a role in this development, as: 1) the mandate of service to country diminished, 2) instant communications whittled away at the separation between the spheres, and 3) “the distinction between peacetime and wartime becomes blurred.”

- **Militarism:** According to Mira Sucharov, militarism at the policy level is the perception that “organized violence, or war, is the optimal solution for political problems.” In taking the definition to the normative/societal level, Sucharov postulates that militarism is “the subordination of civil society to military values and the subordination of civilian control of the military for military control of the civilian.”<sup>21</sup>
- **Boundaries/Separation/Permeability:** According to Moshe Lissak, “the boundaries between military and civilian systems were never hermetically sealed. There was mutual influence.”<sup>22</sup> Samuel Huntington elaborated further, stating

the distribution of power between civilian and military groups...varies with the compatibility between ideology prevailing in society and the professional military ethic....The realization of objective civilian control thus depends upon the achievement of an appropriate equilibrium between the power of the military and the ideology of society.”<sup>23</sup>

This resulted in theoretical classification of three specific boundary types: 1) integral, 2) permeated, and 3) fragmented. *Integral* applies to ideal democratic states, where “the interchange between persons holding roles at various levels of the military hierarchy and the environment are under control of those with responsible for setting the operational goals of the armed forces, that is the higher command.” *Permeated* implies a totalitarian regime, where “complete fusion both in respect of goals and of organization between the possessors of the means of violence and other social groups.” Finally, under *fragmented* boundaries, “the interactions of the holders of military roles with holders of

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<sup>21</sup> Mira Sucharov, “Security Ethics and the Modern Military: The Case of the Israel Defense Forces,” *Armed Forces & Society* 3, no. 2 (2005): 190.

<sup>22</sup> Moshe Lissak, “A Militaristic Society or a Democracy in Uniform,” in *Security Concerns: Insights from the Israeli Experience*, ed. Daniel Bar-Tal, Dan Jacobson, and Aharon Klieman (Stamford: JAI Press, 1998), 419.

<sup>23</sup> Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-military Relations* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1957), 94.

civilian roles escape the control of the military elite in a way that impairs its freedom to interact with the political and social environment as a single entity in a consistent manner.”<sup>24</sup>

- **Linkages:** Individual and institutional level meeting points between the civil and military spheres through which unique patterns of interaction occur.<sup>25</sup> These exist at all levels of permeability, but are more readily apparent in cases of *permeated* and *fragmented* connections, where additional meeting points equate to increased fragmentation. In the Israeli case, the linkages include: 1) social networks, 2) political networks, 3) economic networks, 4) educational networks, and 5) military service (via the reserve system).
- **Nation-in-arms:** Portrayed as a model where the boundaries between the civil and military domains are fragmented. First observed in France’s *levee en masse* of 1793, this comprehensive system is predicated upon the conscription of the state’s entire (male) population, later extending to include contributions made by civilians on the home front.<sup>26</sup> According to Uri Ben-Eliezer, “the nation-in-arms model ascribes an important place to the state in creating—or exploiting—nationalist sentiment.”<sup>27</sup> It merges society and the armed forces under one objective, thereby mitigating perception of the military as distant/alien and hopefully reducing the potential for intervention against the government.

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<sup>24</sup> A. R. Luckham, “A Comparative Typology of Civil-military Relations,” *Government and Opposition* 6, no. 1 (1971): 16–18; Stuart A. Cohen, “Changing Civil-military Relations in Israel; Towards an Over-subordinate IDF?” *Israel Affairs* 12, no. 4 (2006): 772; Moshe Lissak, “The Unique Approach to Military-societal Relations in Israel and Its Impact on Foreign and Security Policy,” in *Peacemaking in a Divided Society: Israel after Rabin*, ed. Sasson Sofer (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001), 238–239. Lissak, “A Militaristic Society or a Democracy in Uniform,” 417. Based on role expansion of the IDF beyond purely military functions, as well as cooperation between civil and security domains, Israel most accurately falls into the latter category (i.e., that of fragmented boundaries).

<sup>25</sup> Lissak, “The Unique Approach to Military-societal Relations in Israel,” 239; Lissak, “A Militaristic Society or a Democracy in Uniform,” 417. According to Lissak, this pertains to a “variety of formal linkages or points of encounter between the military system and civilian frameworks,” and that “in every society there are certain meeting points, at different levels.”

<sup>26</sup> Uri Ben-Eliezer, “A Nation-In-Arms: State, Nation, and Militarism in Israel’s First Years,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 2 (1995): 267; Omer Bartov, “The Nation in Arms: Germany and France, 1789–1939,” *History Today* 44, no. 9 (1994): 27–33. Bartov presents an extensive historical overview of nation-in-arms formation and development in both France and Prussia/Imperial Germany. While these may differ in size, practice and rationale from the Israeli model, they laid the groundwork for the practice of mass conscription and holistic effort later incorporated by the Jewish state.

<sup>27</sup> Ben-Eliezer, “A Nation-In-Arms: State, Nation, and Militarism in Israel’s First Years,” 268–269. Ben-Eliezer paints an unflattering picture in his description of nation-in-arms. While he acknowledges that the model does not “excel” in military coups, he tends to harp on the potential for militarism, whereby the natural impetus is to select force as a means of confronting political issues.

## B. THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

The underlying requirement in explaining the evolution of Israeli civil-military relations is establishing a coherent conceptual definition/framework, which can be effectively applied across the spectrum of socio-political models. First and foremost, the very nature of relations between legitimate governments and their armed forces need be articulated. In Huntington's seminal work, *Soldier and the State*, it is postulated that civil-military relations are shaped by three underlying variables: 1) the level of external threat (his functional imperative), 2) the constitutional structure of the state (one of his societal imperatives), and 3) the ideological composition/perceptions of society (the other societal imperative).<sup>28</sup> The author opines that "civil-military relations is the principle institutional component of military security policy" and that "the principle focus of civil-military relations is the relation of the officer corps to the state. Here the conflict between functional and societal pressures comes to a head."<sup>29</sup> This inspired the dual premises that, 1) civil and military domains should always remain distinctly separate and 2) professionalization of the military can inherently instill an organizational subordination to civilian leadership.<sup>30</sup> Huntington proceeds to describe the five ideal/distinct patterns of relationship, based on the following independent variables: 1) level of military acceptance in society (pro/anti), 2) amount of military political power (low/high), and 3)

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<sup>28</sup> Peter D. Feaver, *An Agency Theory Explanation of American Civil-military Relations during the Cold War* (Durham, NC: Duke University, 1997), 1–87, <http://www.poli.duke.edu/dipe/Feaver1.pdf>, 1 (accessed October 23, 2009).

<sup>29</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-military Relations*, 1, 3.

<sup>30</sup> Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*, 24. In this manner, encouraging professionalism will allow the military to focus on martial pursuits and its own autonomy, leaving politics to the politicians. This is the basis for the preponderance of modern civil-military theories, and has long been deemed the optimal arrangement in Western societies.

level of military professionalism (low/high).<sup>31</sup> These are basic guidelines for assessing the interrelationship between the two spheres but, while applicable to most states, do not account for all possible examples (notably, Israel).

Samuel Finer, in his work *The Man on Horseback*, adopts an opposing stance regarding Huntington's emphasis on the merits of military professionalism. As armed forces are highly organized, hierarchical, goal oriented and well armed, they inherently pose a threat to civilian leadership if not adequately subordinated.<sup>32</sup> Rather than assuring formal, long-term civilian control, it is his contention that professionalism can actually isolate the armed forces from society and exacerbate its corporate consciousness, creating the potential for backlash against civil leadership.<sup>33</sup> Finer, therefore, believes that "firm acceptance of civilian supremacy, not just professionalism, is the truly effective check against military intervention."<sup>34</sup>

The issue of civil control itself has traditionally lacked adequate definition, tending to be rooted in law, custom and tradition. Kobi Michael defines it as "a process whose efficiency is best measured by evaluating the relative influence of military officers

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<sup>31</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-military Relations*, 96–97. These permutations include: 1) anti-military, high military power and low military professionalism (found in developing nations), 2) anti-military, low military power and low military professionalism (World War II Germany), 3) anti-military, high military political power and high military professionalism (the United States from the Civil War through World War II), 4) pro military, high military political power and high military professionalism (Prussia during late 19<sup>th</sup> century), and 5) pro-military, low military political power and high military professionalism (the United Kingdom during the 20<sup>th</sup> century). While Israel does not neatly fall under any one of these constructs due to its unique circumstances, the fourth example appears the closest due to the high level of security threat and exaggerated influence of the Israel Defense Force (IDF).

<sup>32</sup> Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*, 6–13. According to Finer, "the armed forces ...are not only the most highly organized association in the state. They are a continuing corporation with an intense sentiment of solidarity, enjoying...considerable favor. This formidable corporate body is more lethally and heavily armed than any other organization in the state, and indeed enjoys a near-monopoly of all effective weapons."

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 25–26; Yehuda Ben-Meir, *Civil-military Relations in Israel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 15. Finer states "the very nature of the professionalism on which Huntington sets such store...in fact often thrusts the military into collision with the civilian authorities." He further demonstrates the weakness of Huntington's position by listing several examples of highly professionalized militaries that intervened in politics. This includes not only Germany and Imperial Japan, but contains a reference to the United States' MacArthur/Truman standoff.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 25, 30.

and civilians over state decisions.”<sup>35</sup> Huntington, Finer, Janowitz, and Cohen are all supporters of the need for strong civilian control, as well as separation between the two spheres. “To maintain democracy, it is necessary for the military to be under the control of the civilian authority,” and there remains a “tendency to regard the relative autonomy and political neutrality of the military elite as necessary to democracy.”<sup>36</sup> Conversely, Peri, Lissak, Horowitz, Ben-Eliezer and Schiff believe that closeness between the civil and military domains actually fosters a positive environment. “Closeness preserves democracy: it is instrumental in preventing conflict between them, and hence decreases the chances for military coups.”<sup>37</sup>

Theoretically, civilian control can be broken down into two distinct methodologies, consisting of *subjective* or *objective* mechanisms. According to Huntington, “subjective civilian control achieves its end by civilianizing the military, making them the mirror of the state. Objective civilian control achieves its end by militarizing the military, making them the tool of the state” (see Figure 1<sup>38</sup>). Historically, the military has sought an increase of objective control, while civilian governments have been more inclined to seek/maintain subjective control.

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<sup>35</sup> Kobi Michael, “Military Knowledge and Weak Civilian Control in the Reality of Low Intensity Conflict—The Israeli Case,” *Israel Studies* 12, no. 1 (2007): 38.

<sup>36</sup> Etzioni-Halevy, “Civil-military Relations and Democracy: The Case of Military-political Elites’ Connection in Israel,” 402. The corollary to this approach is that military involvement in the public process indicates both a weakness of civil control and a failure of political institutions.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 402–403.

<sup>38</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-military Relations*, 83; Boene, “Western-type Civil-military Relations Revisited,” in *Military, State and Society in Israel: Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*, 46.

## Controls Over the Military

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Subjective</b>
<b>External</b>	<p><i>Direct control (subordination)</i> Precautionary and retrospective surveillance.</p>	<p><i>Indirect control (subordination and coordination)</i> Amount of public support and societal regard, <i>a priori</i> and <i>a posteriori</i>.</p>
<b>Internal</b>	<p><i>Indirect control (subordination and coordination)</i> <i>A priori trust + a posteriori surveillance.</i></p>	<p><i>Direct control (subordination)</i> Trust based on precautionary measures (recruitment screened, pledges of fidelity, shared values, common interests).</p>

## Classical Methods of Civil Control Over Armed Forces

Figure 1. Controls over the Military

Huntington's position stipulated that subjective control (i.e., the maximizing of civilian power relative to the armed forces) was the dominant format utilized by Western society until recently.<sup>39</sup> It seeks to improve the influence of one particular group/segment/faction at the expense of others via the cooption and incorporation of military influence. A given regime, therefore, seeks to limit access to the legitimate means of organized violence to those it trusts, by controlling access to positions of senior military leadership via the appointment/dismissal process.<sup>40</sup> Concurrently, the use of

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<sup>39</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-military Relations*, 80–83. In this statement, “recent” implied the late 1950s (i.e., time of publishing). Under this broad heading, Huntington spells out the various forms of subjective control, to include: 1) government institutions, 2) social class, and 3) constitutional form.

<sup>40</sup> Boene, “Western-type Civil-military Relations Revisited,” in *Military, State and Society in Israel: Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*, 47–48.

short-term conscription reduces the risk of a state-within-a-state by, 1) eliminating the possibility of a clique developing a long-term sense of individuality and 2) increasing the armed forces' loyalty to the state itself.

Objective control, conversely, is a function of maximizing military professionalism and autonomy for use as a state tool. According to Huntington, “objective civilian control not only reduces the power of the military to the lowest possible level vis-à-vis all civilian groups, it also maximizes the likelihood of achieving military security.”<sup>41</sup> Cohen concurs with the need for strong control over the armed forces, stating, “‘objective’ control over the military requires not just a mature democracy but also a professionally autonomous military.”<sup>42</sup> The thought process is that by keeping armed forces hermetically separated from society, hobbled by restrictions on its rights and civil liberties, and focused on the development of its own distinct skill set, they are less inclined to interfere in the state’s political affairs.<sup>43</sup> In this case, focus is levied against the rank and file military membership, who are both more difficult to supervise and outside the appointment/dismissal domain typical of subjective control.

While Huntington and his followers traditionally chose to view the two spheres as formally distinct and separate entities, emphasizing civilian control of the military, a newer generation of scholars (to include Douglas Bland, Yehuda Ben-Meir and Rebecca Schiff) challenge the assumption that splitting the domains is the most effective approach. Ben-Meir, adopting a fusionist approach, believes that too much emphasis has been placed on the past separation of the armed forces and society. His position is that

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<sup>41</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-military Relations*, 83, 85; Luckham, “A Comparative Typology of Civil-military Relations,” 22; Feaver, “The Civil-military Problematique,” 160. According to Luckham, “there exist political constraints as well as reasons of profession self interest to keep the armed forces out of the struggle for political power.” Feaver opines that “objective control weakens the military politically without weakening it in military terms.”

<sup>42</sup> Stuart A. Cohen, “Changing Civil-military Relations in Israel,” 782. “An officer corps focused on its own professional tasks...would be politically neutral and less likely to intervene in politics.”

<sup>43</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-military Relations*, 83; Boene, “Western-type Civil-military Relations Revisited,” in *Military, State and Society in Israel: Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*, 46–47; Feaver “The Civil-military Problematique,” 160. Huntington further opines that “civilian control of the military decreases as the military become progressively involved in institutional, class and constitutional politics.” Conversely, Feaver stipulates, “interference or meddling in military affairs undermines military professionalism and so undermines objective control.”

more focus needs to be placed on the interaction between the two domains, as “the military is constantly involved in the affairs of the state as is the civilian authority in the affairs and that this two-way influence is constant” (see Figure 2<sup>44</sup>).

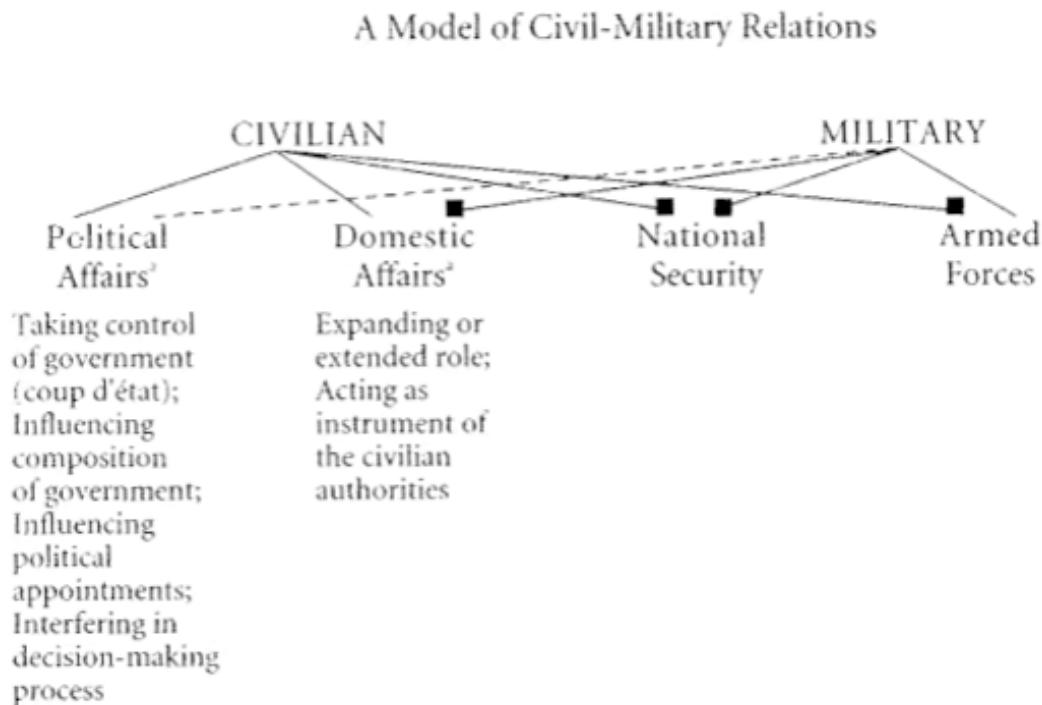


Figure 2. A Model of Civil-military Relations

It is Ben-Meir’s opinion that “the threat to popular control is not from military adventurism or the warrior caste but rather from mutual meddling and the blurring of civil-military areas of special competence.”<sup>45</sup>

According to Bland’s perspective on “shared responsibility,” a normative partnership exists between the two domains, as “civil-military relations are built on particular ideas that have evolved into principles, norms and rules embedded in

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<sup>44</sup> Ben-Meir, *Civil-Military Relations in Israel*, 4–5. The dotted line represents prohibited involvement. Blackened squares show the main areas of interest in civil-military relations. As demonstrated, government is involved in all four aspects of the relationship, while the military traditionally only functions in three.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 4.

institutions and reinforces by history, experience, and prejudice.”<sup>46</sup> His baseline assumption is that older models are conceived with an exceedingly narrow focus, which, coupled with the undue influence of specific national and cultural proponents, skews theoretical outcomes.<sup>47</sup> “The relationships and arrangement of responsibilities are conditioned by a nationally evolved regime of ‘principles, norms, rules and decision making procedures around which actor expectations converge’.”<sup>48</sup> His premise is that *civilian direction* is a more accurate terminology than *civilian control*, as it implies there is an inter-sphere relationship based on exchanges and interaction between “friendly adversaries.”<sup>49</sup> As such, “the key to civil direction of the military is an effective accountability mechanism that enables the civil authority to hold military officers to account...against agreed upon standards.”<sup>50</sup>

Rebecca Schiff’s Concordance Theory adopts a constructivist approach, diverging from traditional realists in its explicit focus on domestic features. She examines actors and indicators as cultural, historical and institutional variables, rejecting the assumption that, 1) civilians *must* control the military or 2) there is a single, correct answer to all

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<sup>46</sup> Douglas L. Bland, “A Unified Theory of Civil-military Relations,” *Armed Forces and Society* 26, no. 1 (1999): 16.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 8. As an example, Bland laments the fact that attention is historically focused solely on coups, a narrow subset of civil-military relations. His position is that “they tend to overlook the other, perhaps more common civil-military problems confronting societies and their armed forces.”

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 21. According to Bland, “civil control of the military is managed and maintained through the sharing of responsibility for control between civilian leaders and military officers.”

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 18–19; Boene, “Western-type Civil-military Relations Revisited,” in *Military, State and Society in Israel: Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*, 45. According to Boene, Civil-military relations is not about *controlling* the armed forces, but incorporating it into both society and the political process via effective integration and coordination.

<sup>50</sup> Bland, “A Unified Theory of Civil-military Relations,” 20. “Where the accountability mechanism is strong and effective, control is strong and effective.”

individual cases.<sup>51</sup> Instead, Schiff highlights dialogue, accommodation and shared values among society's key components, contending that "three partners—the military, the political elites and the citizenry—should aim for a cooperative relationship that may or may not involve separation but does not require it."<sup>52</sup> She utilizes four indicators in assessing the qualitative value of domestic civil-military relations, to include: 1) social composition of the officer corps, 2) political decision-making process, 3) recruitment method, and 4) military style.<sup>53</sup> Ultimately, the objective of Concordance Theory is to demonstrate "the institutional and cultural conditions that affect relations among the military, the political elites, and society," predicting that a diminished risk of military intervention results from increased cooperation and coordination between the three key components.<sup>54</sup>

Another recent theoretical approach is the Peter Feaver's application of Agency Model to civil-military relations.<sup>55</sup> His point of departure (similar to Huntington) is that civilians must inherently control the military sector, in this case, via a principal-agent

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<sup>51</sup> Rebecca L. Schiff, "Civil-military Relations Reconsidered: A Theory of Concordance," *Armed Forces & Society* 22, no. 1 (1995): 7–24; Harold D. Lasswell, "The Garrison State," *The American Journal of Sociology* 46, no. 4 (1941): 461. Boene, "Western-type Civil-military Relations Revisited," in *Military, State and Society in Israel: Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*, 65–66; Michael, "Military Knowledge and Weak Civilian Control," 34. The novelty of Concordance Theory, particularly in relation to legacy models, is that it "considers the unique historical and cultural experiences of nations." It also contradicts Harold Lasswell's "Garrison State Theory," which postulated that long-term exposure to external threats would eventually lead to the militarization of society writ large. It further speculated that "decisions will be more dictatorial than democratic, and institutional practices long connected with modern democracy will disappear." In the case of Israel, this assumption has not been borne out, as the state and society remain firmly democratic.

<sup>52</sup> Rebecca L. Schiff, "Civil-military Relations Reconsidered: A Theory of Concordance," 7, 11–13. Schiff defines each of the three principle components: 1) the armed forces are readily obvious, 2) the political leadership are elites who represent the government, and 3) the citizenry, who are most often omitted from traditional theories (although are, according to her, highly significant).

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 8, 13–16. The social composition of a state's officer corps can be either broad or narrow, depending on particular historical background and preferences. Budgetary issues and collusion between the government and military (resulting in a "military-industrial complex") are often a function of the political process. Recruitment is a function of coercion (i.e., conscription) or persuasion (i.e., willing service through volunteerism). Finally, military style is the development of symbols and rituals, which develop as a result of history and culture.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>55</sup> Feaver, An Agency Theory Explanation, 1–87; Boene, "Western-type Civil-military Relations Revisited," in *Military, State and Society in Israel: Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*, 66–67; Michael, "Military Knowledge and Weak Civilian Control," 39; Kobi Michael, "The Dilemma behind the Classical Dilemma of Civil-military Relations: The "Discourse Space" Model and the Israeli Case during the Oslo Process," *Armed Forces and Society* 33, no. 4 (2007): 520–522.

configuration.<sup>56</sup> Feaver utilizes a binary game approach to determine the level military subordination via measurement of “work and shirk,” as well as expectations of possible detection and punishment.<sup>57</sup> He seeks to include all formats and configurations, remaining agnostic regarding what is to be considered acceptable (or not). According to the author, Agency Model:

treats civil-military relations as comprised of an ongoing series of strategic interactions. The interactions begin with civilians seeking to trade off the advantages of specialization against the disadvantages of agency. The advantages are that the military function can be performed by experts, freeing the time and energy of civilian masters for other tasks. The disadvantages are the ones inherent in any political relationship: will my representative truly serve my best interests or will he exploit his position to pursue selfish goals?<sup>58</sup>

The model does appear to confirm Huntington’s perspective that an optimal environment is one where friction is minimized through military acquiescence to civil guidance, and is effective at explaining civil control over the military. Unfortunately, it has some significant shortcomings as well. Based principally on the U.S. paradigm, Huntington appears to discount the likelihood of either friction or military intervention once professionalization has been achieved. It also does not provide needed insight into nuanced levels of shirking, ranging from blatant to latent. Additionally, according to Kobi Michael, the Agency model, 1) makes the assumption that principals are rational actors who can *effectively* formulate desired goals/outcomes and 2) only being concerned

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<sup>56</sup> Feaver, An Agency Theory Explanation, 11. According to Feaver, “the Agency Model is able to incorporate Huntington’s argument. It confirms that Huntington’s theory is logically consistent about how Civil-military relations might have played out during the Cold War.”

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 3–8. These terms are plays on colloquialisms, and merely serve to define compliance/non-compliance of civilian directives. Both will have a bearing on the level of intrusive monitoring required, and to what degree this perceived micro-management will incite further friction on the part of the armed forces.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 2.

with output, fails to take into consideration precisely how the decision making *process* functions.<sup>59</sup> Finally, in the Israeli case, it does little to explain the military's influence over the decision-making and policy process.

More recently, Kobi Michael proposed a new, Israeli-centric construct to explain why the Jewish State's armed forces functioned as such a dominant partner through the years.<sup>60</sup> His Discourse Space Model maintains that intellectual authority is the driving force behind a de facto civil-military partnership and that decision making is conducted in a discourse space alternatively referred to as a “black box” (see Figure 3<sup>61</sup>).

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<sup>59</sup> Michael, “The Dilemma behind the Classical Dilemma of Civil-military Relations,” 521–522. Regarding the former, Michael notes that certain states (Israel among them) are characterized by “strategic helplessness,” whereby civil leadership has little capability of formulating or articulating long-term or strategic goals.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 521, 525; Michael, “Military Knowledge and Weak Civilian Control,” 47. According to Michael, “It is true that all of the military’s activities are done with the permission and the authorization of the political level, but in most cases, the political directives are derived from the military knowledge infrastructure, hegemonic knowledge that has almost no competitors.”

<sup>61</sup> Michael, “The Dilemma behind the Classical Dilemma of Civil-Military Relations,” 525. The “black box problem” is the process of civil-military relations is distilled down to a level of intellectual encounters between the echelons. Whichever has the ability to develop recognized expertise in a given field will become the de facto principle in the relationship dynamic.

### Overview of Discourse Space Model

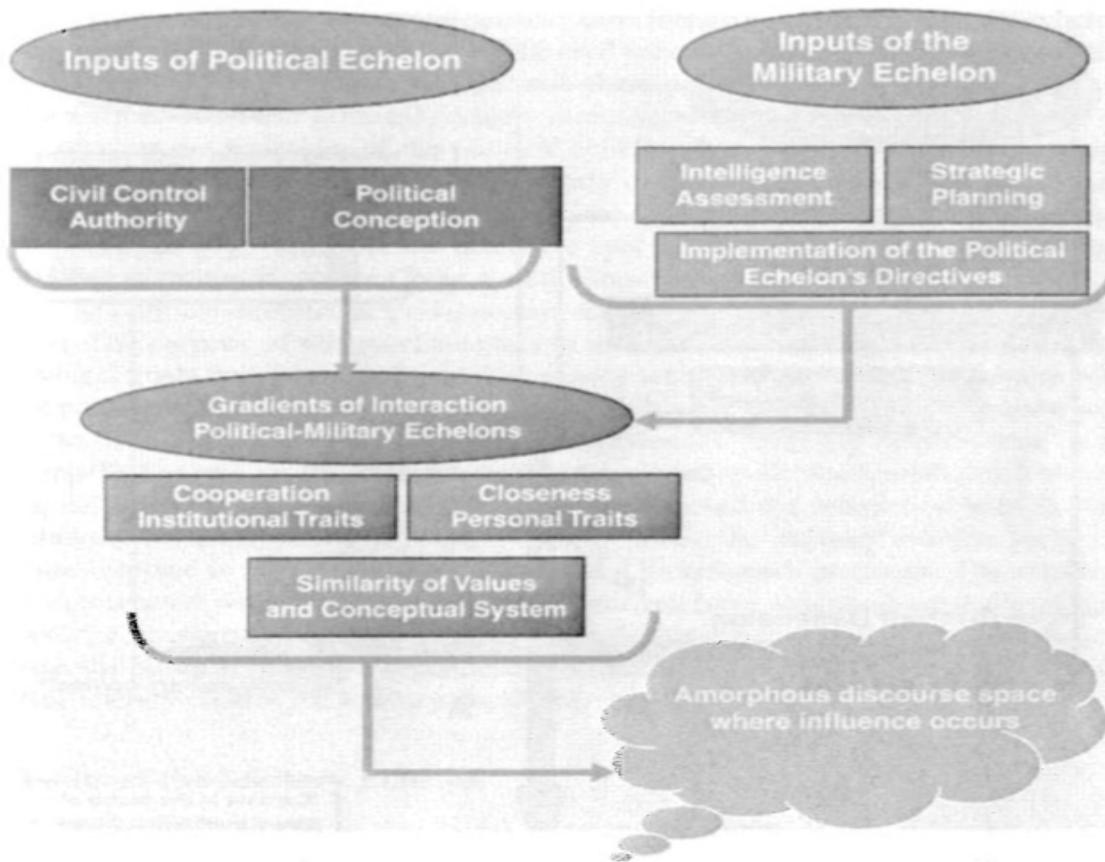


Figure 3. Overview of Discourse Space Model

In his theory, public discourse is the key to determining who will control the civil-military dynamic via competition for the population's perception/opinion.<sup>62</sup> In the Israeli case, the civilian government's failure to develop or maintain the perception of adequate

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<sup>62</sup> Michael, "The Dilemma behind the Classical Dilemma of Civil--Military Relations," 521. "If the agent...holds the unique position of being able to influence public discourse, then it maintains a degree of influence over the decision-making process."

security-related expertise relegates it to a subordinate status.<sup>63</sup> Michael further elaborates that both functional expansion and necessity have rendered the IDF an “epistemic authority” in the eyes of the population.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Michael, “Military Knowledge and Weak Civilian Control,” 28. The theory breaks down inputs into the system into: 1) political, 2) military, and 3) interactions between the domains. In the case of Israel, the civilian leadership has voluntarily abrogated its control over security policy due to its dependency on the IDF for institutional knowledge regarding security matters. The military responds by providing both intelligence and strategic planning, for which no comparable infrastructure exists within the civilian domain. Finally, interaction between the domains is a function of fragmented boundaries, which lead to inherently close ties. Senior IDF officials routinely participate in Cabinet meetings, and there is a similarity of perspective due to routine migration of military officers into the public domain.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 33. Oren Barak and Gabriel Sheffer, “Israel’s ‘Security Network’ and its Impact: An Exploration of a New Approach,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 38, no. 2 (2006): 242. Michael attributes his definition of epistemic authority to Arie Kruglanski’s *Lay Epistemic and Human Knowledge: Cognitive and Motivational Bases* (New York, 1989). It states, “the information source that the individual relies on when he tries to acquire and internalize knowledge about defined issues. Individuals tend to believe that experts are right because they are experts. Consequently, individuals tend to appraise expert views as valid and reliable.” This ultimately results in an information dependency on those perceived as knowledgeable regarding important issues (i.e., the IDF and national security in Israel).

### **III. PRINCIPAL ENABLERS OF THE ISRAELI POLITICAL-MILITARY SYSTEM: SOCIETY, POLITICS AND THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

While Kenneth Waltz and the Neo-Realists would likely choose to examine Israel at the macro level as a unitary/rational actor, this undervalues the importance of domestic players, ideology and personalities in civil-military relations. Hassan Barari, therefore, refutes the contention that only state-level participants play an important role in foreign policy making.<sup>65</sup>

Unfortunately, the focus on Israel traditionally devolves away from the domestic picture, where “the inability to create policy has been aggravated by political fragmentation...caused by the electoral system and reflects a society marked by political, social, ethnic and religious divisions.”<sup>66</sup> Rather, the nature of the country’s security dilemma has perennially affected sub-actors in the developmental structure, all of whom have an impact on the nature, composition and functionality of the system’s evolution. The three principle components are, 1) the populace and 2) a political system that defers policy decisions to the state’s defense establishment, and 3) a gradually evolving economy historically tethered to its own military-industrial complex (MIC).

Notably, a shift in domestic influence and direction can be traced to the aftermath of 1967’s “Six Day” War. The perception of long-term conflict shifted from wars of “necessity” to wars of “choice,” profoundly affecting population’s view of threat and

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<sup>65</sup> Hassan Barari, “Israel and the Decline of the Peace Process, 1996–2003,” *The Emirates Occasional Papers* 51 (2003): 3–4. According to Barari, “a democratically elected government cannot reach an agreement with another country’s government without taking into account its domestic political milieu.” As such, internal concerns and constituencies will ultimately undermine international progress even if Israel’s senior leadership were in favor of a given issue (i.e., willing to invest the necessary capital). Domestic debate regarding peace has served to polarize Israeli politicians and society, while terrorism inherently drives both toward the right of the political spectrum.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 3. Barari firmly believes that domestic politics must be taken into consideration. Anecdotally, he states, “ideological preferences and the changing dynamics of domestic politics have influenced the public debate in Israel on the future of the territories seized in 1967.”

security.<sup>67</sup> The accompanying second and third order effects rippled across the civil, political, and economic realms, facilitating a reevaluation of Israel's early guiding principles (i.e., collectivism, Statism, "no choice," etc.). The strategic surprise and loss of life inflicted on Israel during the 1973 War cemented this change in mindset, demonstrating that the various systemic components were evolving in both outlook and prioritization. In subsequent years: 1) the Israeli population has become less willing to bear the personal costs of an interminable conflict, particularly as permeability between the spheres has decreased, 2) the political apparatus has become increasingly polarized and fragmented, and 3) the economy has shifted toward privatization and market freedom. While no one of these components (in and of themselves) are noteworthy as a harbinger of wide scale civil-military re-orientation, taken collectively, they do indicate gradual evolution underway within Israel.

## **B. ISRAELI SOCIETY—MOBILIZATION AND RESPONSE TO INTRACTABLE CONFLICT**

As noted, the conflict between Israel and its foes can be deemed of an intractable nature. According to Daniel Bar-Tal, experiences of this sort are characterized as "protracted, irreconcilable, violent, of zero-sum nature, total and central."<sup>68</sup> Threat is considered the key variable, whereby Israel must maintain constant vigilance and preparation for war, orienting a significant portion of her manpower and financial resources toward security matters. This is the result of continuous clashes, which have been "exhausting, demanding, stressful, painful and costly—in human terms as well as material terms."<sup>69</sup> As such, many in the Israeli public harbor an innate fear and distrust of the Arab world, viewing the struggle as one of life versus death.<sup>70</sup> Concurrently, the conflict's extended duration has resulted in a sense of war fatigue, whereby "erosion and

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<sup>67</sup> The 1948, 1967 and 1973 wars were all perceived as wars of necessity and survival. Conversely, the 1956 and 1982 wars (and all operations since) are seen as wars of choice, seeking to achieve specific political goals.

<sup>68</sup> Daniel Bar-Tal, "Societal Beliefs in Times of Intractable Conflict: The Israeli Case," *International Journal of Conflict Management* (1997–2002) 9, no. 1 (1998): 27–28.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Gad Barzilai, "War, Democracy, and Internal Conflict: Israel in a Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics* 31, no. 3 (1999): 329.

weariness set in due to Israel's succession of wars.”<sup>71</sup> Asher Arian states that Israeli Jews believe “the onus of Israel's security position is obvious,” but despite the enduring security challenges, they will ultimately prevail in overcoming these threats.<sup>72</sup>

Attempts to cope with intractable hostility are spread across the Israeli spectrum, encompassing military, political, economic, societal and psychological convictions.<sup>73</sup> Society's shared belief system is structured in such a way as to instill behavioral traits, which mitigate the conflict's negative effects through coping mechanisms. The three notable examples put forth by Asher Arian include: 1) “perceived success,” 2) “denial” and 3) “a people apart.”<sup>74</sup> The first centers around the Israeli expectation of military success, based on past historical examples. Secondly, the concept of “ein brera” (no choice) acted as a means of filtering out information deemed unnecessary for the cause's positive advancement. A function of maintaining the proper perspective, this often led to “tunnel vision” on the part of the population. Finally, the historical notion of “a people apart” sanctified Israel through nationalist and religious symbolism by excluding all “others,” reinforcing the normative value of Israeli solidarity.

The Israeli defense model/military system arose in direct response to the conflict's duration and violence, a function of society's unique response to it. Defined by permeability between the defense and civilian spheres, securitization rapidly evolved as

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<sup>71</sup> Gad Barzilai, Ben-Meir, *Civil-Military Relations in Israel*, 27–28. Israel has been a party to six periods of major military action over its 61 years, coupled with innumerable smaller engagements. The relative cost in terms of manpower, damage, and lost economic efficiency has been quite high.

<sup>72</sup> Asher Arian, “A People Apart: Coping with National Security Problems in Israel,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 33, no. 4 (1989): 605, 609. He further elaborates on the “cognitive harmony between feelings of being threatened and of believing in the country's ability to overcome.”

<sup>73</sup> Bar-Tal, “Societal Beliefs in Times of Intractable Conflict: the Israeli Case,” 27. This was “based on the perceived conflict-dominate reality which was harsh, violent and threatening. The intractable conflict...was real for Israeli Jews, who made every effort to adapt to it.” Bar-Tal provides a listing of such beliefs, to include: 1) the justness of one's own goals, 2) security, 3) delegitimizing one's opponent, 4) creation of a positive self image, 5) self-victimization, 6) patriotism, 7) unity, and 8) one's own wish for peace.

<sup>74</sup> Arian, “A People Apart,” 608–612, 621.

the central thematic tenet within the Jewish State.<sup>75</sup> This is most apparent in general mobilization under the construct of “nation-in-arms,” whereby society as a whole bears the brunt of defending the state.<sup>76</sup> It has been further demonstrated in the practices of: 1) universal conscription, 2) military “role expansion” into the civilian domain, and 3) high levels of prestige afforded the IDF. As such, there exists a symbiotic relationship between the IDF and the populace, with the former acting as a unifying force for society as a whole.<sup>77</sup>

The very foundation of the “people’s army” concept was based on a near universal conscription policy established under the 1949 Defense Service Law.<sup>78</sup> It was a response by Israel’s early leadership to the state’s quantitative inferiority relative to its Arab adversaries, coupled with the conflict’s extended duration. As such, a tiered system was devised, through which, 1) the utilization limited manpower and resources could be optimized and 2) the economy could be partially shielded from lengthy/costly

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<sup>75</sup> Micha Popper, “The Israeli Defense Forces as a Socialization Agent,” in *Security Concerns: Insights from the Israeli Experience*, ed. Daniel Bar-Tal, Dan Jacobson, and Aharon Klieman (Stamford: JAI Press, 1998): 169–170. Popper alludes to bi-directional permeability. While the IDF is influenced by its foundation as a largely conscript/reserve-based force, organizational character is also imparted on its members, who “can be expected to absorb at least some of the IDF’s social values and perceptions, which they will then carry back to their civilian lives.”

<sup>76</sup> Bar-Tal, “Societal Beliefs in Times of Intractable Conflict: The Israeli Case,” 27.

<sup>77</sup> Popper, “The Israeli Defense Forces as a Socialization Agent,” in *Security Concerns: Insights from the Israeli Experience*, 167–168; Michael Barnett, ‘High Politics is Low Politics: The Domestic and Systemic Sources of Israeli Security Policy, 1967–1977,’ *World Politics* 42, no. 4 (1990): 540. According to Popper, the IDF served as a symbolic representation of society’s major values and ideals. As such, it became the focal point of “symbolic order,” whereby the Israeli public demonstrated a reverence based on “wisdom, intuition, [and] exceptional understanding.” Barnett further explains, “the nation-state and the mass army appear together, the twin tokens of citizenship within territorially bounded political communities...Military service as a hallmark of citizenship and citizenship as the hallmark of a political democracy.” These are concepts rooted in European history and practice, descending most notably from the French Revolution.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 558; Asher Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2005), 326. Importantly, Arian notes that conscription is not completely universal, as 1) Yeshiva students are deferred or exempt from active service and 2) the reserves (as 70% of the manpower pool) are manned by roughly 20% of the population. This latter point is also reflective of the IDF’s increasing professionalism, coupled with a surplus of manpower due to increased Russian immigration at the Cold War’s conclusion.

disruptions.<sup>79</sup> Under a “convergent” arrangement, the burden was broadly levied across society, and was interpreted as a patriotic rite of passage for generations of Israelis.<sup>80</sup>

Concurrently, careers in the IDF are of relatively short duration, resulting from what Micha Popper refers to as a “calling” versus “profession” model.<sup>81</sup> The intent was to inhibit the development of cliques or a praetorian class, as officers retire at a young age and do not morph into a potential rival for elected leadership. They subsequently move laterally to seek second careers in positions of civic influence, jumping from the top of one command structure (i.e., the military) to that of another (i.e., politics, business, etc.). This distinctly Israeli phenomenon is euphemistically referred to as “parachuting,” whereby senior officers rapidly commence alternate careers at the conclusion of their military service.<sup>82</sup> According to Joel Beinin, there has long existed a “political tradition of regarding senior officers as uniquely capable leaders in civilian political life despite their lack of any significant non-military experience.”<sup>83</sup> This trend originated in the early 1960s, as Israel’s founders departed political life and were replaced by the first

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<sup>79</sup> Stuart A. Cohen, “The Peace Process and Its Impact on the Development of a ‘Slimmer and Smarter’ Israel Defence Force,” *Israel Affairs* 1, no. 4 (1995): 2–3; Eliot Cohen, Michael Eisenstadt, and Andrew Bacevich, “Israel’s Revolution in Security Affairs,” *Survival* 40, no. 1 (1998): 48–49; Barzilai, “War, Democracy, and Internal Conflict: Israel in a Comparative Perspective,” 329. “In combat Israel is forced to mobilize up to more than 90 percent … of its fighting age manpower.” Over the long term, this could have significant impact on both the society and economy. See Chapter IV for additional details regarding the specific nuances of Israel’s tiered military structure.

<sup>80</sup> Popper, “The Israeli Defense Forces as a Socialization Agent,” in *Security Concerns: Insights from the Israeli Experience*, 169–170; Cohen, “Slimmer & Smarter,” 15. Convergence represents a system where permeability exists between a society’s military and civilian spheres, and a small, professional corps is augmented by a large, civilianized force. This connectivity is in direct opposition to a “divergent” model (such as the UK), where both domains are relatively insulated from one another (a function of volunteerism vice conscription).

<sup>81</sup> Popper, “The Israeli Defense Forces as a Socialization Agent,” in *Security Concerns: Insights from the Israeli Experience*, 171–172. Under this premise, officers view themselves as an elite, serving the greater good of the nation as a function of dedication and patriotism. This is poignantly illustrated in Mati Peled’s statement “we saw ourselves as defenders of the nation. We had no intention of becoming professional army officers.”

<sup>82</sup> Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 89. Both MAPAI/LABOR and HERUT/LIKUD have succeeded in wooing like-minded officers at the conclusion of their careers. The former were able to entice Moshe Dayan, Yitchak Rabin, and Yitzchak Mordechai, while the latter received the support of Chaim Weizman, Ariel Sharon, and Shaul Mofaz.

<sup>83</sup> Joel Beinin, “Political Economy and Public Culture in a State of Constant Conflict: 50 Years of Jewish Statehood,” *Jewish Social Studies* 4, no. 3 (1998): 107. According to Beinin, one-third of all generals and one-fifth of all officers above Colonel retired and embarked on political careers upon military retirement.

generation of IDF leadership (simultaneously retiring from the armed forces).<sup>84</sup> A precedent was thus established, dividing government and society between those who served and those who did not. While there has never been consensus among military officers (either in or out of uniform), mitigating the possibility of a unified position against the elected leadership, interconnections between the armed forces and civilian sectors are both innate and robust.

The civil-military system is also unique in the IDF's "role expansion" into what would normally be considered civilian responsibilities, to include: 1) education, 2) engineering and infrastructure, 3) medicine, and 4) culture (see Figure 4<sup>85</sup>).

<u>Social Welfare</u>
Rehabilitation and training of marginal and distressed youth
Street gang work <sup>a</sup>
Welfare activities in the Administered Territories: <sup>b</sup>
Transfers (subsidies)—food, money, clothing, etc.
Rehabilitative—parole services, crime prevention, etc.
Community and family development
<u>Medicine</u>
Army physicians at civilian hospitals
Soldier-nurses
Health services in the administered territories <sup>c</sup>
Improvement of hospitals and provision of health courses in southern Lebanon
<u>Education</u>
Premilitary training (primarily technical)
Completion of education (elementary and secondary, Hebrew language)
Soldier-teachers at elementary schools in development towns and border settlements
Gadna (pre-IDF youth movement) courses at schools
<u>Culture</u>
Radio station (Galei Zahal)
Periodicals that also have civilian circulation (e.g., <i>Bamahane</i> )
Publishing house

Figure 4. Examples of IDF Role Expansion into Israeli Society

<sup>84</sup> Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 88–89. By the 1960s, "the aging and retirement of the traditional political leadership and the retirement in their mid-forties of a generation of defense and army leaders due to the early retirement policy of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). The apex of the political pyramid was vacated just as the apex of the military pyramid was being rejuvenated. It was only natural for experienced army officers...to assume positions of responsibility and authority in politics."

<sup>85</sup> Alex Mintz, "The Military-Industrial Complex: American Concepts and Israeli Realities," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 29, no. 4 (1985): 626–627, 634; Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 327; Lissak, "The Unique Approach to Military-societal Relations in Israel," 241–242; Lissak, "A Militaristic Society or a Democracy in Uniform," 418, 425; Sucharov, "Security Ethics and the Modern Military: The Case of the Israel Defense Forces," 183–184; Cohen, "Slimmer & Smarter," 6.

This broadly interpreted responsibility stemmed from an early desire on the part of David Ben-Gurion to utilize the military as society's unifying element. With a large influx of refugees and immigrants during Israel's formative years, coupled with finite government resources stretched to the breaking point, the IDF assumed a central role by providing services unavailable elsewhere. While the level of responsibility has fluctuated throughout the years, diminishing with budgetary reductions and trends toward increasing professionalism, it initially served to cement the relationship between civilian and military domains.

The interactive system also long fostered a high regard for the armed forces among Israeli society.<sup>86</sup> This resulted from repeated superior performance in battle, patriotism, and the military's identification with the state. According to Asher Arian, "the dominant values of the country are reflected in the army, and vice versa."<sup>87</sup> Prestige peaked with the 1967 War and remained high until 1973, at which point, it began to ebb in the aftermath of a perceived political-military fiasco.<sup>88</sup>

The downward trend accelerated during the 1980s and 1990s following the First Lebanon War, as negative public perception of military service and the IDF's deteriorating level of charisma became more pronounced. As the conventional threat to Israel diminished, and the population lost its early sense of fear, collectivism and patriotism (in lieu of growing self interest), a new perspective on defense emerged. According to Micha Popper:

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<sup>86</sup> Popper, "The Israeli Defense Forces as a Socialization Agent," in *Security Concerns: Insights from the Israeli Experience*, 267–268. Popper presents findings of a 1992 study indicating the Israeli public, notoriously suspicious of government institutions, "expressed almost unqualified faith (over 90%—'great faith') in the IDF."

<sup>87</sup> Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 327.

<sup>88</sup> Popper, "The Israeli Defense Forces as a Socialization Agent," in *Security Concerns: Insights from the Israeli Experience*, 176. "Although Israel eventually won that war, the surprise attack, the unreadiness of the army, and the initial confusion and great loss of life revealed the generals' clay feet."

the IDF was at its most charismatic in Israel's early days, when it projected a sense of security, of knowing the right way, at a time when the citizens of the newly created state felt that they and the state were both in constant danger of extinction. After the Six-Day War, Israelis' perceptions of their country changed. From seeing Israel as a tiny, beleaguered state, they came to see it as a strong, unvanquished country, rich in sophisticated know-how and technology.<sup>89</sup>

This was further exacerbated by budgetary constrictions, which sought to professionalize the IDF and contract its role within society writ large, a substantive departure from the early days.<sup>90</sup> The former threatens to drive a wedge between the population and military, shifting the armed forces from their role as central, socializing agent.<sup>91</sup> The latter indicates significant responsibilities have passed back to a public sector already constrained by budgetary, defense and societal issues. That said, Asher Arian still believes the IDF has a noteworthy role to play, opining, "military service is still an important requisite for many positions of power and importance in Israeli life."<sup>92</sup>

### C. THE ISRAELI POLITICAL SYSTEM—FRAGMENTATION IS THE NAME OF THE GAME

When examining the Israeli political system, close attention must be paid to the intersection between domestic policies and the security domain due to the ongoing nature and duration of conflict to which the state is exposed. Arian believes that "the centrality of the defense issue in Israel is maintained by leaders of the major political parties," principally through their utilization of the armed forces as a policy instrument.<sup>93</sup> It was a disparate collection of armed Zionist factions, united under central political leadership,

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<sup>89</sup> Popper, "The Israeli Defense Forces as a Socialization Agent," in *Security Concerns: Insights from the Israeli Experience*, 176.

<sup>90</sup> Cohen, "Slimmer & Smarter," 7–9.

<sup>91</sup> Popper, "The Israeli Defense Forces as a Socialization Agent," in *Security Concerns: Insights from the Israeli Experience*, 178. Popper believes, "The army is in transition from a model in which it was the undisputed representative of Israelis symbolic center....to a 'professional' model with much less impact on society as a whole." This has potential ramifications for both those who have and have not served, as the path to societal success no longer runs exclusively through military service.

<sup>92</sup> Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 324–326.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. "Defense policy provides the best example of an institutional interest in the Israeli political system."

which successfully established and defended the fledgling state. This inherently linked the government, party and armed forces (re-designated the IDF) as de facto partners, quite unlike other democracies. Despite preliminary attempts to subordinate the military to civilian rule, early civilian leadership opted to follow the British tradition of maintaining relationships based on custom and tradition vice formalized legal standing (a function of the lack of a written constitution). This is most clearly demonstrated in the nature of the DEFMIN, who functions more accurately as a liaison to the military vice its civilian leader.<sup>94</sup> This was a byproduct of endemic politicization and a failure to distinguish boundaries adequately, whereby the IDF “ultimately became an army working as a partner in the political process, integrated with the civil power even beyond the national-security field.”<sup>95</sup> As civilian leadership has an inherent need to focus on external threats and the mobilization of internal capacity simultaneously, it is necessary to negotiate with domestic actors in an effort to prepare for inevitable hostilities.<sup>96</sup> As such, “the interaction between domestic politics and security affairs has been overlooked by most analysts in the international security field.”<sup>97</sup>

Another notable feature of the Israeli political system is the high degree of fragmentation, coalition-building, and sheer number of parties involved; the result of an unwieldy application of PR elections.<sup>98</sup> According to Barari, “the huge number of Israeli

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<sup>94</sup> Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 334. “The defense minister is an extremely important actor in Israeli politics because of the centrality of the defense issue, but the Defense Ministry as an implement of civilian control is relatively unimportant.”

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 330, 332. “The lines of demarcation between the civil and military are not clear partially because the army is such an integral part of Israeli civil society and partially because basic institutions of civilian control have never been established.”

<sup>96</sup> Barnett, “High Politics is Low Politics: The Domestic and Systemic Sources of Israeli Security Policy, 1967–1977,” 534–535. According to Barnett, “the state’s ability to project its military power is dependent on its competence at mobilizing the requisite resources.” Unfortunately, it becomes difficult to juggle and balance the two (often-contradictory) agendas simultaneously.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 529–530. Barnett further elaborates that “neglecting the domestic dimension of security policy leads to a forgetfulness of the extent to which the people taking critical decisions also spend much of their time worrying about the levels of taxation, competing demands on public expenditure, promoting their own personal and party images, getting re-elected, and so on.”

<sup>98</sup> Freilich, 639–640, 645–646, 649–650; Mark Heller, “Israel’s Dilemmas,” *Survival* 42, no. 4 (2000): 28–29; Barari, “Israel and the Decline of the Peace Process, 1996–2003,” 15–17; Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 117, 203–205. “Section 4 of the Basic Law: Knesset states that ‘the Knesset shall be elected in general, national, direct, equal, secret and proportional elections’.”

parties represented in the Knesset have left a profound impact on the way the government is formed.”<sup>99</sup> This is a function of exceedingly low election threshold requirements for party participation in government, whereby a two percent return affords entrance for fringe elements.<sup>100</sup> Voting is conducted via list format, vice direct selection, with the proportionate number of candidates from each party determining the Knesset’s composition.<sup>101</sup>

As such, government by coalition and coalition management are crucial to understanding how the system functions concerning civil-military relations, as there has never been outright control exercised by any one party. The two major players must rely on the assistance and support of like-minded allies, with the trend toward consolidation of blocs commencing by 1965.<sup>102</sup> Politicians expend as much energy managing these coalitions as participating in policy and legislative processes, whereby, 1) conflicting agendas often poison the strategy and efforts of senior leaders and 2) the military submission of singular recommendations (typically, the middle of the road approach) is received as a fait accompli. Upon reaching critical mass, the defection of one party (or more) from the partnership can spell the end of an administration, leaving it open to a possible no-confidence vote. This has perpetuated an environment where smaller, fringe elements have amassed a disproportionate level of influence as king-makers.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Barari, “Israel and the Decline of the Peace Process, 1996–2003,” 17.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.; Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 203; Shahar Ilan, “Knesset Panel Okays Proposal to Raise Election Threshold to 2.5 Percent,” July 25, 2007, *Ha’aretz*, September 21, 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/886128.html> (accessed September 21, 2009), 1. The threshold was as low as one percent through 1992, before being raised to two percent in 2003. A 2007 Ha’aretz story alludes to the possibility of this figure being raised to two and a half percent, but there has been no further confirmation. Regardless, any rate increase is meant to exclude some of the smaller parties, with the hope of bringing increased stability to the system.

<sup>101</sup> Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 118. According to Arian, “for a politician facing the challenge of forming a coalition in the Knesset...the size of the groups participating in the discussions and the interests they represent are crucial.”

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 121. This practice resulted from MAPAI/LABOR attempts to shore up support following the defection of Ben-Gurion, Dayan and Peres (to form RAFI). It became increasingly utilized over the years as the two major parties sought to band together allies into comprehensive voting blocs.

<sup>103</sup> Barari, “Israel and the Decline of the Peace Process, 1996–2003,” 15–17. “The ability of a government to make a strategic decision is influenced by its stability and the domestic political considerations of its partners in the government.” This fragmentation is a more recent phenomenon, as MAPAI/LABOR held unilateral control over the Israeli political system through Israel’s formative years.

Other traits of the system include: 1) de facto political fiefdoms, where individual ministers function in autonomous environments of self-interest,<sup>104</sup> 2) a bloated cabinet structure meant to increase coalition size, yet decrease the PM's influence, 3) elitism manifest in a rigid hierarchical pecking order, where "a party, a politician, and a citizen all tend to know their place in the power structure and rarely overreach themselves,"<sup>105</sup> and 4) a universally negative opinion of/disdain for politicians among the Israeli population.<sup>106</sup> The latter case was a byproduct of the apparatchik model, whereby politics became a profession in and of itself, with party members seeking to climb the career ladder as a function of longevity (similar to the Soviet system).<sup>107</sup>

Historically, Israeli politics were born into a system dominated by single-party control for the state's first 29 years. This was an outgrowth of early MAPAI/LABOR hegemony within the Zionist movement's party politics.<sup>108</sup> The unique nature of this environment tied the center-left party organization to both the state's apparatus (by extension, the IDF) and the labor movement (via the Histadrut<sup>109</sup>), providing an extraordinary degree of control over policy, security and economic interests. This

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<sup>104</sup> Freilich, "National Security Decision-making in Israel: Processes, Pathologies, and Strengths," 640, 649. "Ostensibly just first among equals, the prime minister has few prerogatives of office and formal sources of influence over ministers."

<sup>105</sup> Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 15, 83–88. "Politics in Israel has always been party politics, and party politics has been elite politics." Each tier is wholly dependent on decisions determined from above.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 16. Anecdotally, this low level of prestige could be described as: "in the late 1970s, 'Knesset member' was ranked 64<sup>th</sup> out of 90 preferred occupations by a national sample."

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 101–102. This was especially prevalent among the Labor party, as systemic hegemony had been maintained for such a lengthy period. Asher illustrated the mirror image of this practice in the United States, where the more independent minded private citizen (Cincinnatus) temporarily sets aside a time period to serve his/her country (before returning to civilian life).

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 123. By the mid-1930s, Ben-Gurion and MAPAI amassed control over the socialist party structure and the workers' movement, two key elements of the Mandate Period Zionist proto-state. This cleared the way for de jure command of the political and military process once statehood was declared in May 1948. The linking of all three sub-elements (political, economic and military) provided for long-term stability of MAPAI/Labor hegemony. Arian thus describes the political process through the 1970s as "an alternate way to democracy."

<sup>109</sup> Yair Aharoni, "The Changing Political Economy of Israel," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 555, no. 1 (1998): 131–132; Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 57. The Histadrut is outside this work's purview, but was an example of a workers' union developing excessive power and influence via direct ties to/collusion with the state during Israel's formative years. "When the Histadrut and the government were controlled by the same party—as was the case between 1948 and 1977—the political and economic power was awesome."

“dominant party system” continued in effect until 1977, remaining remarkably stable over a prolonged timeframe. Despite periodic ideological fragmentation, political defections, and opposition challenges, MAPAI/LABOR continued to function as the dominant political player. It thrived (in part) due to a rigid structure in which “society tends to be held together by the hierarchies that serve as the principle links between government and citizen.<sup>110</sup>

Over time, the party moderated its position as a function of the political process, elevating nationalism and pragmatism over socialist idealism. Arian states, “the socialist ethic that ruled for decades has withered, although some signs of it can still be found. The element of nationalism, on the other hand, has retained its intensity, if not strengthened.”<sup>111</sup> Concurrently, MAPAI/LABOR peaked by 1969 and gradually lost influence over time, a function of: 1) creeping malaise and loss of fervor, 2) “crises of succession,” 3) poor policy management and corruption, 4) war-weariness (particularly in the aftermath of the 1973), and 5) an opposition party that finally developed a sufficient measure of support and legitimacy (during the 1967 War).<sup>112</sup> By 1977, an era of bi-polar politics commenced with the momentous electoral loss to Menachem Begin.<sup>113</sup>

HERUT/LIKUD existed as the perennial opposition party in the Israeli system, demonstrating diametric opposition within the Zionist political spectrum. This was a carryover from the Yishuv days, playing political foil to MAPAI/LABOR and foretelling the evolution of a bipolar model. Its founder, Ze’ev Jabotinsky, ascribed to a revisionist

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<sup>110</sup> Aharoni, “The Changing Political Economy of Israel,” 125. “The role of centralized hierarchical structure...in the society is very important.”

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 86–94. Israeli politics are traditionally marked by turmoil when determining party (by extension, national) leadership. This is a function of intra-party squabbles based on generational groups within both MAPAI/LABOR and HERUT/LIKUD. Members of the “2<sup>nd</sup> Aliya” (Ben-Gurion and Jabotinsky), were replaced by those of the “3<sup>rd</sup> Aliya” (Eshkol, Meir and Begin). These eventually gave way to Peres Rabin, Dayan, Shamir and Sharon. None of the transition periods have been smooth or seamless, most recently resulting in a situation of net-parity where neither party has been able to establish a dominant figurehead.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 125, 127. According to Arian, a dominant party will ultimately bring about its own demise, rather than the actions of the opposition. In the case of MAPAI/LABOR, the 1973 War shocked the Israeli psyche, raising questions about the nation’s Political-military capabilities. While the party’s power and influence had been in steady decline, this incident (more than any other), crystallized the public’s frustration. It would have a significant impact on voting four years later, turning many moderates against MAPAI/LABOR and delivering Begin to prominence.

form of Zionism, calling for the application of an “iron wall,” through which Jewish military strength would be used to regain all of biblical Eretz Yisrael. He believed that the Arabs would eventually come to the realization that Israel could not be defeated, at which point they could be integrated into society as equals. This was characterized by the use of violence (via the IRGUN) during the waning Mandate period, against British, Arabs and even rival Jews.

Jabotinsky also believed that the Zionist mission should focus on efforts to cultivate the middle classes, in direct contradiction to Ben-Gurion’s socialist model of supporting the working class. This earned him (and Begin, his successor) the latter’s lasting enmity, which was carried into the political process upon Israel’s formation.<sup>114</sup> By the 1960s, HERUT/LIKUD gained status as a legitimate opposition party, with Menachem Begin entering the 1967 National Unity Government just prior to the war. Throughout the 1970s, it was clear that MAPAI/LABOR was losing its grip on political hegemony, and moderate party defections made a right wing victory possible. Ironically, HERUT/LIKUD shifted to a more pragmatic approach regarding peace and security, with Begin relinquishing the Sinai Desert during the Camp David Accords. This has enabled the party to mitigate MAPAI/LABOR’s former hegemonic position, maintaining relative parity over the majority of the next 25 years (see Figure 5<sup>115</sup>).

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<sup>114</sup> Aharoni, “The Changing Political Economy of Israel,” 141–144. There were several examples of animosity between the two leaderships boiling over, particularly concerning Ben-Gurion and Begin. Most notable was the “Altelena Affair” when, in 1948, the Israeli government ordered the IDF to fire on an IRGUN/HERUT ship carrying arms and supplies. Ben-Gurion had wisely merged all political militias into a unitary defense force, and this political challenge was a key barometer in determining how the fledgling state’s response to organized (and potentially violent) dissent. While the matter was resolved, and the Irgun peacefully disbanded (morphing into HERUT), the psychological effects were lasting. According to Arian, “The causes of the antagonisms have faded, but the mutual recriminations and passionate expressions of political views have been passed to the next generation.”

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 118. The trend demonstrates a pattern of diminishing support for MAPAI/LABOR from 1969 onward (1992 was the outlier). Concurrently, HERUT/LIKUD’s popularity rose through the 1970s, before suffering a setback following the 1982 Lebanon invasion. Since then, relative parity within the system has restricted either party from assuming a dominant position.

### Knesset Results for Labor and Likud, 1965–2003

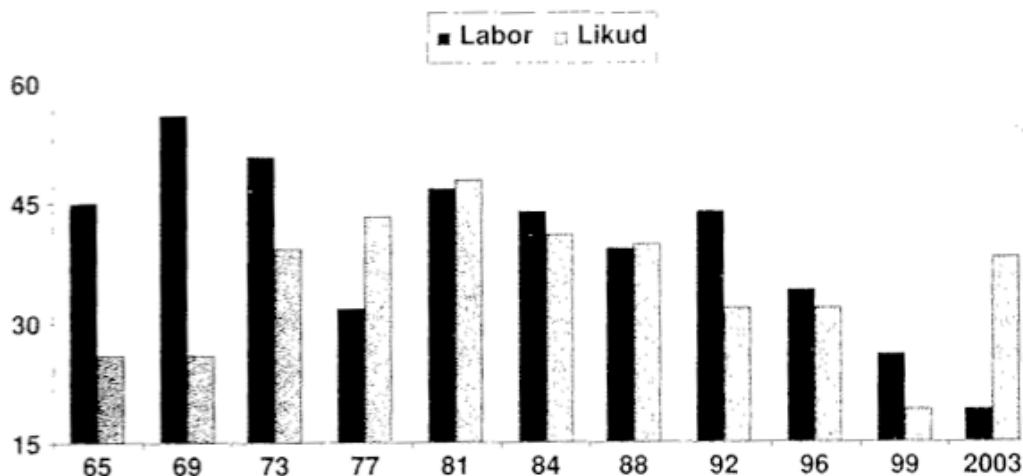


Figure 5. Knesset Results for Labor and Likud, 1965–2003

This shift was predominantly a function of multiple parties gaining influence in the system. While MAPAI/LABOR and HERUT/LIKUD remained the two principle actors, a host of outlier entities contributed to the fractious and dysfunctional nature of the process (running the gamut from left to extreme right, secular to religious). The “liberals” tended to resemble middle of the road, European style parties. They changed coalitions several times, with a segment affiliating with HERUT/LIKUD and another disappearing into obscurity.<sup>116</sup> The center-left “Centrists” were highly pragmatic idealists who broke with LABOR/MAPAI leadership during several key periods.<sup>117</sup> According to Arian, they “attempted to fill the political and ideological middle ground between what they saw as a decaying LABOR party and an irresponsible and out-of-touch LIKUD,” but would return to the fold or evaporate when unable to challenge the “big two”<sup>118</sup> Finally, religious parties (relative late-comers to the political arena), can be found in varying

<sup>116</sup> Aharoni, “The Changing Political Economy of Israel,” 142–143.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 157–161. There were three distinct, internal challenges to MAPAI/LABOR. In 1965, Ben-Gurion and Dayan (central figures) broke with the party to establish RAFI. Most eventually merged back in with MAPAI to form the LABOR coalition. In 1977, the Democratic Movement for Change (DMC) broke from LABOR’s periphery, enabling HERUT/LIKUD to win the election. Finally, in 2003, Shinui diverged to run on an anti-religious platform (winning big).

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 157.

flavors, ranging from the Zionist-affiliated to anti-nationalistic/messianic. These groups tend to be self-contained entities, wielding disproportionate influence on the political system due to the nature of party coalitions.<sup>119</sup>

From a political-military perspective, this fragmentation led to the strategic helplessness, described by Kobi.<sup>120</sup> Efforts to reform the system have, to date, been marginally successful (at best). The institution of higher thresholds for political inclusion will go some way toward diffusing the power of smaller entities by decreasing fragmentation and restoring a measure of influence to the larger parties. Unfortunately, attempts to revamp either the election process or general political culture have (thus far) been dismal failures. The voting reform of 1996, allowing the direct selection of a PM for the first time, was an effort to bolster the position's power relative to the Knesset. An unexpected byproduct of the change was diminished support for the LABOR and LIKUD blocs, with additional seats won by the fringe groups.<sup>121</sup> By 2003, the system became so dysfunctional that it was scrapped in favor of a return to the pre-1996 model.

#### D. THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX AS AN ECONOMIC DRIVER

Israel's founders envisioned an economic model where the sub-segments of capital, labor and defense were nationalized and merged, with two objectives in mind, 1) survival of the state and 2) furtherance of the party.<sup>122</sup> According to Yair Aharoni, the

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<sup>119</sup> Aharoni, “The Changing Political Economy of Israel,” 150–157. Over recent years, religious parties have become a formidable political force, amassing the third highest percentage of votes and traditionally siding with the winning coalition. The larger blocs curry favor among these groups by offering perks, such as IDF exemptions, special schools and economic incentives. Furthermore, “religious parties in Israel today are the clearest case of total inter-penetration of religious, social, cultural, political and often economic life.”

<sup>120</sup> Michael, “The Dilemma behind the Classical Dilemma of Civil-military Relations,” 521–522. As noted earlier.

<sup>121</sup> Barari, “Israel and the Decline of the Peace Process, 1996–2003,” 16. “The new system produced exactly the opposite of what was intended. It boosted the representation of smaller parties and simultaneously shrank the size of the bigger ones.”

<sup>122</sup> Barnett, “High Politics is Low Politics: The Domestic and Systemic Sources of Israeli Security Policy, 1967–1977,” 547–549; Aharoni, “The Changing Political Economy of Israel,” 127–129. “In the first years of Israel’s existence, the economic system was highly politicized, and political parties controlled most of the resource allocation.” As such, it was Ben-Gurion’s goal to see the nationalization of employment, education and health, while the military would be excluded from the political process.

initial operating environment founded during the Yishuv period was highly politicized.<sup>123</sup> The government/party were the key actors, gradually accumulating hegemonic control over human and production capital. This was vital in shoring up the fledgling country during its early years. Unfortunately, Israel possesses few natural resources, and has perennially been saddled with a prohibitively expensive defense burden as a percentage of its GDP (see Figures 6<sup>124</sup>, 7<sup>125</sup>, and 8<sup>126</sup>).

	Defense expenditure as % of GDP, 1990	Defense expenditure as % of GDP, 2001	Defense expenditure as % of government expenditure, 2001
United States	5.3	3.1	15.7
Japan	0.9	1.0	6.1
Germany	2.8	1.5	4.7
Great Britain	3.9	2.5	6.9
Spain	1.8	1.2	6.1
Greece	4.7	4.6	16.4
Israel	12.2	7.7	18.5

Figure 6. Expensive Defense Burden as a Percentage of its GDP

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<sup>123</sup> Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 65. According to Arian, there was a “tremendous concentration of power and resources in the hands of a very small number of politicians and civil servants.”

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 71; Aharoni, “The Changing Political Economy of Israel,” 130–131; Beinin, “Political Economy and Public Culture in a State of Constant Conflict,” 124; Mintz, “The Military-Industrial Complex: American Concepts and Israeli Realities,” 628. Figure 6 provides a general comparison of Israeli defense spending relative to contemporary Western democracies. As a function of GDP, this burden fluctuated between 21.7% and 32.8% (1968–1985), according to Beinin. Determining an accurate figure is difficult to assess, as universal conscription and extended reserve duty have a skewing effect on productivity and labor value.

<sup>125</sup> Hanan Sher, “Facets of the Israeli Economy—The Defense Industry,” June 1, 2002, *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, September 20 2009, [http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000\\_2009/2002/6/Facets+of+the+Israeli+Economy+The+Defense+Industr.htm](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2002/6/Facets+of+the+Israeli+Economy+The+Defense+Industr.htm) (accessed September 20, 2009), 6; Moti Bassok, “Defense Budget to Grow, Education Spending to Shrink,” October 9, 2009, *Ha’aretz*, October 1, 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1117753.html> (accessed October 9, 2009), 1. This chart is a snapshot in time designed to depict a relative comparison between Israel and several Western states. More recently, Moti Bassok reports that while the percentage of Israeli GDP allocated to defense spending has continued to decline (currently projected at 6.3% for 2010), the absolute amount of spending in real terms is steadily climbing (48.6 billion shekels in 2009, and 53.2 billion shekels in 2010). This reflects broad growth in the Israeli economy, vice contraction of defense spending.

<sup>126</sup> “Arming Up: The World’s Biggest Military Spenders by Population,” June 8 2009, *The Economist*, November 5, 2009, [www.theeconomist.com](http://www.theeconomist.com) (accessed November 5, 2009), 1. This chart demonstrates the per capita level of defense spending based on population size.

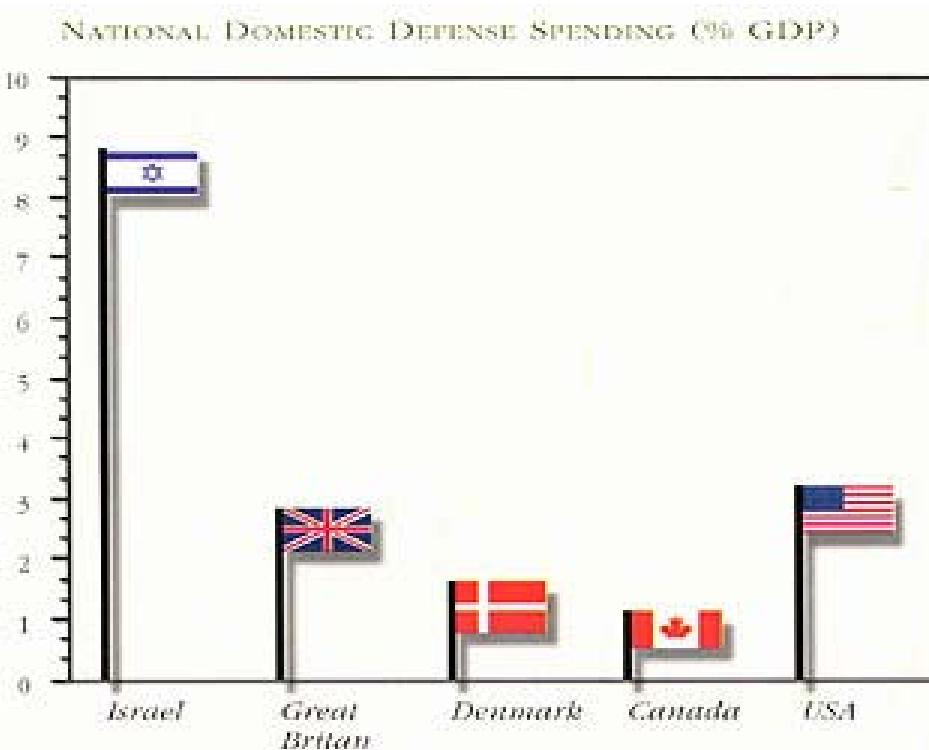


Figure 7. National Domestic Defense Spending (% GDP)

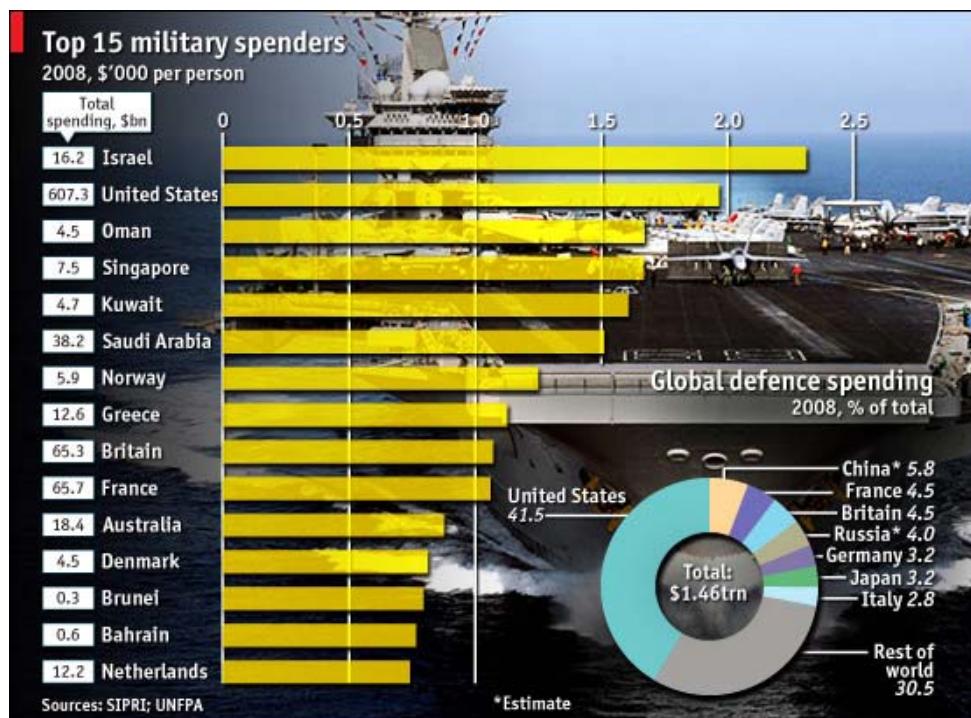


Figure 8. Top 15 Military Spenders

In response, the state was forced to rely on a tenuous combination of internal and external funding sources. The former included: 1) donations from world Jewry, 2) reparation payments from the Federal Republic of Germany, and 3) growing assistance from the United States.<sup>127</sup> The latter, placed a heavy tax burden on Israeli citizens themselves, who accepted it as necessary evil.<sup>128</sup> Assets were then centralized; applied to maximize employment and security with little regard for efficiency. Fiscal policy was “shaped by both the underlying distribution of societal power and the state’s institutional capacities that enable it to penetrate, extract from and monitor society.”<sup>129</sup> The economic effort was thus characterized by three distinct spheres of ownership within the overarching model, including: 1) public, accounting for the largest percentage of expenditures, 2) Histadrut, the workers’ organization, was tethered to the MAPAI/LABOR party and had enormous influence through the 1980s, and 3) private, comprised of small/medium firms (until recently).<sup>130</sup>

The majority of capital and means of production were initially controlled by the government, with arms industries placed under the purview of the Ministry of Defense (MOD). While state and production sources are typically separated in democracies, a concern over foreign reliance convinced early leadership that “industrial development

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<sup>127</sup> Barnett, “High Politics is Low Politics: The Domestic and Systemic Sources of Israeli Security Policy, 1967–1977,” 547–549; Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 49, 72–74; Beinin, “Political Economy and Public Culture in a State of Constant Conflict,” 102, 109. According to Beinin, “in 1950–1955, 45 percent of all unilateral capital transfers to Israel came from world Jewry.” This allowed for an early growth period without the need for repayment, enabling increased focus on domestic defense spending.

<sup>128</sup> Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 76; Aharoni, “The Changing Political Economy of Israel,” 130. The public itself was seen as domestic capital, and only through maximized economic effort (i.e., optimal employment) could they be fully brought to bear.

<sup>129</sup> Barnett, “High Politics is Low Politics: The Domestic and Systemic Sources of Israeli Security Policy, 1967–1977,” 558.

<sup>130</sup> Aharoni, “The Changing Political Economy of Israel,” 131–132; Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 57.

and defense requirements are intertwined.”<sup>131</sup> Thus was born a unique hybrid, the Israeli version of the military-industrial complex (MIC). According to Alex Mintz, the development of such a self-contained/actuating entity:

should be viewed as a very powerful interest group, enjoying significant autonomy in its activities, attaining the top priority accorded to security in Israel, and lacking sufficient external control and supervision. It emerged out of a real external security threat, reflecting the belief that Israel must supply its own military needs as much as possible.<sup>132</sup>

The MIC heavily influenced government policy, and became a dominant factor in the Israeli economy by the early 1970s.<sup>133</sup> This was partially a response to political sensitivity regarding the economic well being of large defense companies, as well as means of ensuring an optimal level of political support from the population prior to elections.<sup>134</sup>

From a positive aspect, the MIC: 1) functioned as economic engine for the state, employing approximately 25 percent of the industrial workforce, 2) improved the qualitative process by incorporating high technology, creativity and innovation, 3) expanded the number of tangentially-related civilian businesses via second- and third-

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<sup>131</sup> Barnett, “High Politics is Low Politics: The Domestic and Systemic Sources of Israeli Security Policy, 1967–1977,” 539, 547–549, 553–554; Mintz, “The Military-industrial Complex: American Concepts and Israeli Realities,” 626, 630–631, 634. “Comprises the military bureaucracy, the defense industries, the Ministries of Defense and political representatives.”

<sup>132</sup> Yaakov Lifshitz, “Security and the National Economy,” in *Security Concerns: Insights from the Israeli Experience*, ed. Daniel Bar-Tal, Dan Jacobson, and Aharon Klieman (Stamford: JAI Press, 1998), 317. Lifshitz concurs, stating, “the establishment of a military military-industrial base...was accorded high priority and was considered a central measure to release Israel from absolute dependency on foreign supply for arms.” The Jewish state initially had difficulty securing a reliable external arms supplier, and remained leery of excessive reliance on external benefactors.

<sup>133</sup> Beinin, “Political Economy and Public Culture in a State of Constant Conflict,” 114. “Military production enterprises formed the largest concentration of industrial capital, employed the largest bloc of industrial labor...and constituted the largest group of industrial exporters.”

<sup>134</sup> Alex Mintz and Michael D. Ward, “The Political Economy of Military Spending in Israel,” *The American Political Science Review* 83, no. 2 (1989): 522–523, 531. Regarding the former, conspiracy theory contends that poor economic showing by these companies leads to new rounds of defense spending. Regarding the latter, the political process was intimately intertwined with the business cycles within the MIC. Increased spending would stimulate jobs, which could be expected to translate into more party votes. Additionally, appearing tough on security via strong defense budgets was traditionally well received.

order effects, and 4) augmented foreign trade via increased exports.<sup>135</sup> Mintz also believed the conglomeration was significantly less hawkish than its American counterpart, with primacy focused on profit margin rather than national strategy and policy influence.<sup>136</sup>

The MIC also presented a litany of less-than-optimal considerations for the Jewish state. By tying up huge amounts of resources in military-related production, the growth of consumer/private production was significantly retarded. Not only were labor prices/wages maintained at an artificially high level via government-HISTADRUT-business collusion, efficiency was reduced by the delayed entry of Israelis into the job market due to conscription (as well as reserve duty absences). Ironically, while military service was seen as a ticket to social and economic mobility, many employers would choose to hire those *not* eligible for the IDF.<sup>137</sup>

By the early 1970s, the government opted to move away from direct control of the production process and allow for implementation of *some* privatization.<sup>138</sup> This was a function of: 1) skyrocketing defense costs, 2) the political necessity of full employment assuming primacy over ideology, and 3) a budding willingness to sacrifice a degree of autonomy if the U.S. continued to assist in footing the security bill.<sup>139</sup> This did not end

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<sup>135</sup> Lifshitz, “Security and the National Economy,” in *Security Concerns: Insights from the Israeli Experience*, 318–319; Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 48; Mintz, “The Military-industrial Complex: American Concepts and Israeli Realities,” 629.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 631, 634; Beinin, “Political Economy and Public Culture in a State of Constant Conflict,” 115. In his opinion, while former military leaders were spread out across the MIC as managers and CEOs, there was no single consensus on policy or significant social cohesion within the group (similar to those parachuting into politics).

<sup>137</sup> Lifshitz, “Security and the National Economy,” in *Security Concerns: Insights from the Israeli Experience*, 323.

<sup>138</sup> Barnett, “High Politics is Low Politics: The Domestic and Systemic Sources of Israeli Security Policy, 1967–1977,” 550–552, 555. “The private sector now had an important role because of the government’s decision to move away from etatism and toward economic liberalization.” The public sector was not seen either as efficient or technologically agile as the private domain.

<sup>139</sup> Barnett, “High Politics is Low Politics: The Domestic and Systemic Sources of Israeli Security Policy, 1967–1977,” 550–552, 556–557; Beinin, “Political Economy and Public Culture in a State of Constant Conflict,” 109. Israel had been teetering on the edge of recession prior to the 1967 war, and the astronomical costs associated with the 1973 conflict convinced its leadership that foreign assistance on a large scale (while unpalatable ideologically) would be necessary. From 1967 to 1977, external budget liabilities increased from 15.4% to 26.5%. U.S. support had been gradually increasing through the 1960s, and “after 1971, the U.S. government replaced world Jewry as Israel’s largest donor.”

the central planning effort for defense production, as fiscal manipulation would continue to funnel funding toward “essential” enterprises, with an eye toward the development of a military export market.<sup>140</sup>

By the late 1970s, MAPAI/LABOR lost its political hegemony to HERUT/LIKUD, partially the result of a lagging economy, skyrocketing inflation and a ballooning military budget.<sup>141</sup> The new, conservative government undertook an assault on previous economic programs, with particular interest paid to the grossly bloated size of the public sphere.<sup>142</sup> As the Israeli economy teetered on the brink of fiscal meltdown, a New Economic Policy (NEP) was instituted in 1985 by a unity government. The goal was aimed at: 1) reducing private/public consumption, 2) implementing austerity measures, 3) decreasing the size of the public domain (via increased privatization), and 4) seeking additional assistance from the U.S.<sup>143</sup> The effort was ultimately successful in not only stemming the downturn, but incorporating necessary reforms, which allowed the Israeli economic system (public and private) to thrive during the 1990s era of globalization. This resulted from increased political pragmatism during the post-Oslo period, where

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<sup>140</sup> Aharoni, “The Changing Political Economy of Israel,” 135–136. The military was essentially a captive market, given its inherent high demand for technology and equipment. As such, they tended to be less concerned about where the support was derived, so long as they were able to achieve the mission.

<sup>141</sup> Beinin, “Political Economy and Public Culture in a State of Constant Conflict,” 124. Inflation ultimately hit an annual rate of 445% by 1984. The onset of stagflation was Israel’s “linking its political economy, its military establishment, and the dominant political and cultural assumption of indefinitely protracted conflict with hostile Arab neighbors.”

<sup>142</sup> Ibid. This effort was only partially successful, as HERUT/LIKUD needed to remain strong on defense spending to maintain its political base.

<sup>143</sup> Aharoni, “The Changing Political Economy of Israel,” 138. In this case, economic rationality replaced ideological dogma, and signaled the “end of major substantive differences between Labor and the Likud on macro-economic policy. Both parties now endorsed a program of privatization, marketization and integration into the global economy.”

enhanced security and economy efficiency were seen as parallel goals.<sup>144</sup> That said, while defense budgets have been significantly reduced since the 1980s, they remain the single largest government expenditure (see Figure 9<sup>145</sup>).

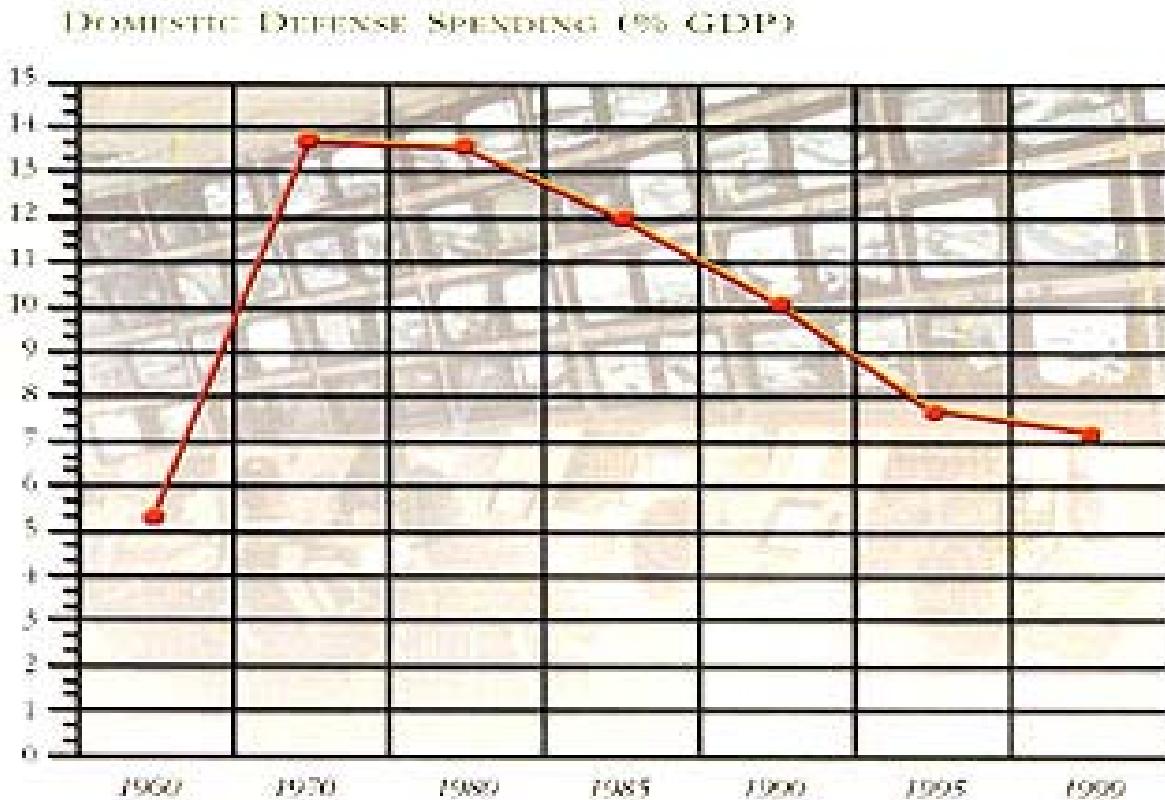


Figure 9. Domestic Defense Spending (% GDP)

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<sup>144</sup> Guy Ben-Porat and Shlomo Mizrahi, “Political Culture, Alternative Politics and Foreign Policy: The Case of Israel,” *Policy Sciences* 38, no. 2/3 (2005): 184–186. Shimon Peres was a firm believer that peace would be an economic win-win for all involved. Ben-Porat concurs, stating that “while the Israeli economy has been on the path of liberalization since the mid-1980s the continuation of the conflict was perceived as impeding economic progress.” Unfortunately, the two have yet to prove mutually supportive, as peace remains elusive. “Despite the economic growth in Israel following the Oslo accords, popular support for the peace process remained tepid.”

<sup>145</sup> Sher, “Facets of the Israeli Economy—The Defense Industry,” 75.

#### **IV. CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS THROUGH THE FORMATIVE YEARS: THE 1967 WAR AS A TURNING POINT**

As previously noted, a unique set of circumstances have contributed to the evolution of a distinctive civil-military relationship whereby the IDF exercises disproportionate influence relative to the elected leadership.<sup>146</sup> Despite proclamations that the Israeli military officially remains subordinate to the country's elected civilian government, the nature of boundaries and cooperation between the two entities remains blurry and troubling, particularly since the 1967 War. It was this seminal event, which: 1) significantly altered the civil-military dynamic in favor of the latter, 2) ended a period of IDF abstention from direct involvement in the political realm, and 3) initiated 20+ years of military dominance behind the scenes.

While this power-sharing has experienced micro-level trend fluctuation based on the personalities of its three key position holders (i.e., PM, DEFMIN and CGS), at the macro-level, the security establishment has clearly assumed a more assertive role in the policy-making process due to politically-oriented factors. According to Udi Lebel,

Defense policy in Israel has always been considered *the* most critical domain, providing Israelis with their most vital public product: security. The tool of security is the army, which has become endowed with a religious status....Security receives the lion's share of the State budget, and defense policy is the key component determining the way citizens vote.<sup>147</sup>

Gone are the days of a military overseen and constrained by the will of a strong civil leadership and party system. In its place, divergent views on security, “second careers” in

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<sup>146</sup> Freilich, “National Security Decision-Making in Israel: Processes, Pathologies, and Strengths,” 635; Stuart A. Cohen, “The Israel Defense Forces (IDF): From a “People’s Army” to a “Professional Military”—Causes and Implications,” *Armed Forces & Society* 21, no. 2 (1995): 248. According to Charles Freilich, since independence, Israel has “confronted an external environment whose primary characteristic has been perceived as one of nearly unremitting and overwhelming hostility.” This is echoed by Stuart Cohen, who believes the lack of boundaries between the two spheres is a byproduct of the ongoing security problem. This has obvious implications for the popular outlook, giving impetus to the military’s role expansion out of necessity.

<sup>147</sup> Udi Lebel, “Civil Society versus Military Sovereignty,” *Armed Forces & Society* 34, no. 1 (2007): 71.

government for senior IDF leaders, and military role expansion/contraction have permanently altered the power relationship. They injected the IDF into a default role as expert and arbiter of issues far beyond simple security. While authors, such as Stuart Cohen maintain the Israeli military's societal role has *decreased* over the past 20 years (see Figure 10<sup>148</sup>), its overall influence certainly remains prominent by any measure.

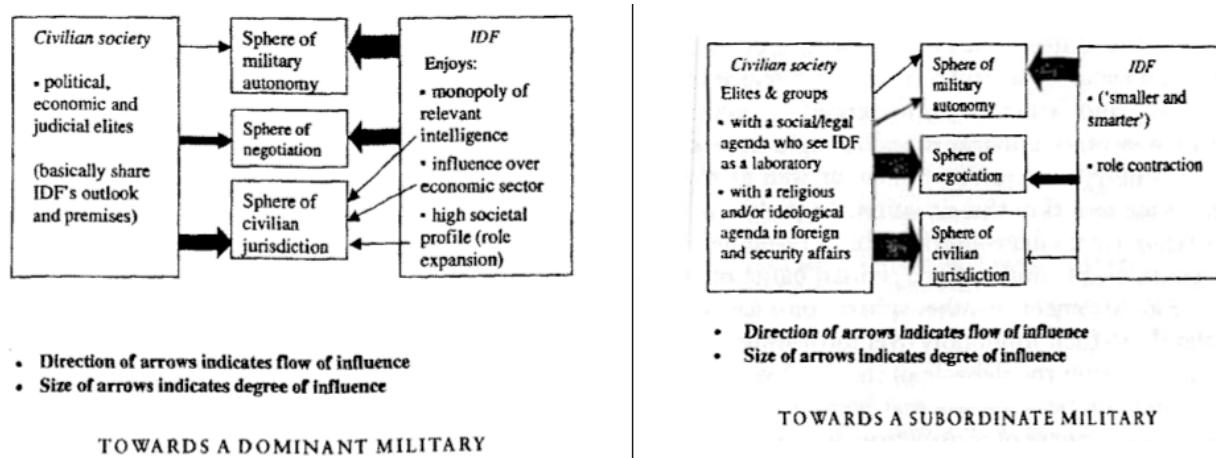


Figure 10. Changing Flow Patterns in IDF Dominance/Subordination

#### A. KEY PLAYERS OF THE ISRAELI SYSTEM

When taking into account the Israeli civil-military model, initial focus must be placed on the nature and interaction of primary leadership positions within government, on both sides of the divide. Notable among these are the PM, DEFMIN, CGS, the Cabinet (alternatively referred to as “the government”) and the Knesset (directly elected legislative assembly). Owing to the lack of a formal constitution, resulting in the reliance

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<sup>148</sup> Cohen, “Changing Civil-military Relations in Israel,” 772–775. Cohen believes “it is now the civilian constituents of the Civil-military equation that are able to exploit the ‘fragmented’ boundaries in order to intrude upon what were once considered exclusively military spheres.” While the initial flow (from the 1960s to 1980s) had been in favor of the IDF, in his opinion, there has been a distinct reversal over the past 20 years. The military now finds itself in the position of having to negotiate with society in a much more confrontational atmosphere.

on a series of “Basic Laws” to define specific rights and responsibilities, the legal interrelationship between civilian and military domains (particularly regarding security matters) tends to remain ill defined and nebulous.<sup>149</sup>

The role of PM, as government head and chief executive of the state, was not formally elaborated until 1968’s “Basic Law: The Government.”<sup>150</sup> Instead, David Ben-Gurion established historical precedent as the guiding principle upon the state’s 1948 founding. While envisioned as a “first among equals” within the Cabinet, Ben-Gurion’s presence and personality brought forth the practice of rule via personal determination and force of will. That said, there was no specific mention of a legal connection between the PM and defense-related issues during the early years, other than that implied in the role as head of government. To combat this perceived shortcoming, a number of Israeli PM’s took on the additional role of DEFMIN, consolidating both state policy and defense leadership in a single individual.<sup>151</sup> It was not until 1991 that a permanent, direct security role for the PM was established with the formation of a statutory Ministerial Committee of National Security.<sup>152</sup>

The nature of the DEFMIN’s role has remained a source of significant contention and debate within the civil-military community due to the position’s vague definition and delineation of responsibility. Established by the 1948 ordinance, which brought the IDF into existence, the DEFMIN exists in a de facto netherworld between the two spheres.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Ben-Meir, *Civil-military Relations in Israel*, 27–55.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>151</sup> Giora Goldberg, “The Growing Militarization of the Israeli Political System,” in *Communicating Security: Civil-military Relations in Israel*, ed. Udi Lebel (New York: Routledge, 2008), 21. Goldberg anecdotally relates that “five of the seven prime ministers who came from the Labour party served as defence ministers at the same time [the exceptions were Moshe Sharett and Golda Meir]...On the other hand, none of the four prime ministers who came from the Likud took the position of defence minister.”

<sup>152</sup> Ben-Meir, *Civil-military Relations in Israel*, 28–39. According to Ben-Meir, “the basic constitutional framework reflects mandatory rule and British traditions, as well as the accumulated experience of the democratically organized Zionist movement.” Formulated along the lines of the British model, Israeli government functions as a small cabinet environment where the Prime Minister is the first among equals, where adhoc precedence is the norm (similar to Europe but very much unlike American propensity/desire for established standards). Differing from their British counterparts, Israel’s Prime Minister can bring about government termination as a political tool but cannot call for new elections unilaterally.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 39–42.

As government (i.e., Cabinet) representative to the IDF, the occupant is primarily considered an actor within the civilian bureaucracy, responsible for budget, acquisition, research and development (R&D) and general support. Operational/military matters are inherently delegated to senior military commanders in his name. The enduring question remains whether the DEFMIN is in effect a “chief of war,” with the authority of a “Super CGS,” or merely the administrative link between the politicians and defense establishment?<sup>154</sup>

The IDF’s CGS, as head of the armed forces, was first mentioned in the Military Jurisdiction Law of 1955. Similar to the PM and DEFMIN, his role has also remained ill-defined, with leadership responsibilities and influence principally a function of custom and tradition as the armed forces’ senior-ranking officer. The CGS’s legal status was not formally defined until 1976, with the passage of “Basic Law: The Army.”<sup>155</sup> Due to the nature of his responsibility to the government for operational security matters, the CGS blurs the political-military boundaries by functioning as a quasi minister.<sup>156</sup> This has obvious and relevant implications for the relationship dynamic with the DEFMIN, his nominal superior.

The Israeli Cabinet/Government, a small group of senior ministers, functions in principal as collective commander-in-chief (CINC) of the armed forces. While there is no direct, formal relationship between this body and the security establishment, the broadly interpreted nature of the “The Basic Law: Government” extends to the central government all executive authority not specified elsewhere (by default). As the Provisional Government established both the state and the military in May 1948, it is, therefore, inferred that the elected leadership has an indirect link to the security apparatus

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<sup>154</sup> Ben-Meir, *Civil-military Relations in Israel*, 39–41. The issue was directly addressed in the aftermath of the 1973 War by the Agranat Commission, which determined that “the lack of a definition of the powers existing in the present situation in the area of defense...makes effective action difficult, blurs the focus of legal responsibility, and even creates lack of clarity and confusion amongst the general public.”

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 31, 35, 41–42, 45, 56, 67; Bar-Or, “Political-military Relations in Israel, 1996–2003,” 365–367. This ordinance stipulated, “the supreme command level in the army is the chief of the general staff.”

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 43. Unlike other Israeli deputy ministers and directors general, the CGS has a dual responsibility of reporting to both his superior (the DEFMIN) and the government (i.e., the cabinet and PM). According to former PM and DEFMIN Shimon Peres, the CGS is therefore “three-quarters military and one-quarter-political.”

via the DEFMIN. Despite this notional subordination, there has been little in the way of a direct control mechanism to oversee defense issues. The Ministerial Defense Committee (MDC) has perennially suffered from haphazard incorporation and a lack of institutionalized authority, with formal constitutional standing only conferred as recently as 1991.<sup>157</sup>

The Knesset (popularly elected Legislative Assembly) has even less direct control or influence over security issues. The majority of power within Israel's political system resides within the executive branch (the cabinet/government), and there are few checks/balances designed to assure an even distribution of power. Israeli legislators do have three specific tools at their disposal, which can be used as a means of redress, to include: 1) legislative ability, 2) budget control (i.e., "power of the purse"), and 3) the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee (FADC). History has demonstrated that the first two are rarely utilized, as the mantra of "national security" consistently serves as a self-censorship function, while the third has little specific influence outside of advisory channels.<sup>158</sup>

## B. THE FORMATIVE YEARS (1948–1967)

As noted, the Jewish State was born into intractable hostility between two nationalist groups (Zionists and Palestinians, the latter supported by surrounding Arabs) who had been in conflict with one another for well over 50 years. As a result of avowed Arab rejection of any partition of Mandatory Palestine, coupled with ongoing conventional and asymmetric threats, the Israeli public's perception rapidly developed an

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<sup>157</sup> Ben-Meir, *Civil-military Relations in Israel*, 29–32. The MDC has traditionally had little authority with which to rein in the military, as it varied in size, scope and importance based on the nature of a given administration. Ben-Gurion never put much stake in the organization's relevance and, while Levi Eshkol increased its responsibilities, several later Prime Ministers (Shamir, in particular) never bothered even convening the group.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 44–51; Freilich, "National Security Decision-Making in Israel: Processes, Pathologies, and Strengths," 641. The FADC was initially downplayed by Ben-Gurion, and traditionally has had little authority beyond 1) consultation and 2) being used by the executive to inform the opposition party of military action to be undertaken (typically after the fact). While the incorporation of numerous "permanent subcommittees" over the years has led to increased exposure for the FADC, in reality, it continues to remain a passive organization hampered by a complete reliance on security-related information from the IDF itself.

engrained focus/reliance on defense and security. Quantitatively inferior to its Arab neighbors, Israel's civil and military leaderships were confronted with the twin dilemmas of, 1) how to mobilize scarce manpower and resources most effectively and 2) how to integrate the rapid influx of immigrants into a cohesive society? The result was a unique blending of state, security apparatus and society, converting potential weakness into a force multiplier.

The development of the IDF thus blurred the lines between military and society by relying on a mass-based, civilianized structure to compensate for an inherent numerical disadvantage.<sup>159</sup> The Israeli armed forces came to rely on a tiered division of labor and responsibility split between: 1) a small, professional component, 2) an active force comprised of young conscripts, and 3) a reserve force, which could be quickly mobilized in the event of a national emergency. It was, therefore, the goal of the active component (both professionals and conscripts) to hold an enemy at bay until the much larger reserve element could be brought to bear as an augmenting force.<sup>160</sup> This model

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<sup>159</sup> Bartov, 27–33. While this may have been unusual from an American perspective, it was quite unremarkable from the European experience. The Nation in arms concept had been pioneered by the French in 1793 and was common throughout the continent prior to 1945 (having been perfected by the Prussians/Germans).

<sup>160</sup> Uri Ben-Eliezer, “From Military Role-Expansion to Difficulties in Peace-Making: The Israel Defense Forces 50 Years On,” in *Military, State and Society in Israel: Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*, ed. Daniel Maman, Eyal Ben-Ari, and Zeev Rosenhek (New Brunswick: Transition Publishers, 2001): 146–147; Uri Ben-Eliezer, “Rethinking the Civil-military Relations Paradigm: The Inverse Relation Between Militarism and Praetorianism through the Example of Israel,” *Comparative Political Studies* 30, no. 3 (1997): 362; Dan Horowitz, “The Israeli Concept of National Security,” in *National Security and Democracy in Israel*, ed. Avner Yaniv (London: Lynne Rienner Publishing, 1993): 15–16; Cohen, From a “People’s Army” to a “Professional Military,” 237–240; Ze’ev Schiff, “Fifty Years of Israeli Security: The Central Role of the Defense System.” *Middle East Journal* 53, no. 3, Special Issue on Israel (1999): 434; Gabriel Ben-Dor and Ami Pedahzur, “Civil-military Relations in Israel at the Outset of the Twenty-First Century,” in *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns*, ed. Uzi Rebhun and Chaim Waxman, 2nd ed. (Hannover and London: Brandeis University Press, 2003): 334–336; Dan Horowitz, “Israel’s War in Lebanon: New Patterns of Strategic Thinking and Civil-military Relations,” in *Israeli Society and Its Defense Establishment: The Social and Political Impact of a Protracted Violent Conflict*, ed. Moshe Lissak (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1984): 87. Once an individual completed active service, a reserve requirement was fulfilled via one month of mobilization per year until “retirement age” (initially 54, later reduced to 45). This provided the necessary force structure to complement the active component when necessary, but also had a significant influence on the unique ties between Israeli society and the IDF. According to Dan Horowitz, “The soldier is called a ‘civilian in uniform’ while the civilian is considered a ‘soldier on eleven-month annual furlough’.”

proved highly successful in Israel's early years as conflicts were typically of short duration and the IDF maintained a significant *qualitative* advantage over neighboring Arab foes.

The armed forces' responsibilities transcended purely military objectives, reaching across into the societal sphere as a function of its "role expansion" in the early years.<sup>161</sup> According to Uri Ben-Eliezer and Stuart Cohen, the IDF was seen as a de facto melting pot, "an instrument of modern Jewish 'nation-building'."<sup>162</sup> It was also responsible for such diverse tasks as: 1) the education of both immigrants and underprivileged Israelis, 2) construction of critical infrastructure projects, 3) providing medical care to segments of the population, and 4) enriching civil culture via entertainment, news and radio.

The foundation, and most important aspect, of this new system was the universally accepted notion regarding civilian control over the military. While security needs took precedence over foreign and domestic policy, Ben-Gurion was determined to remove any/all privatization and factionalism from the IDF to mitigate its potential emergence as a political rival.<sup>163</sup> The military's subordination was, therefore, rigorously overseen by a framework of state-level institutions, and would remain firmly under the

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<sup>161</sup> Ben-Eliezer, "From Military Role-Expansion to Difficulties in Peace-Making," 138–141; Cohen, "From a 'People's Army' to a 'Professional Military,'" 237–250; Cohen, "Changing Civil-military Relations in Israel," 246–247. Ben-Eliezer and Cohen diverge on whether this connection is a positive aspect of the Israeli system. The former, taking a negative perspective, argues, "the differentiation between soldier and civilian is seriously weakened." Cohen, on the other hand, believes the process has been positive and laments what he sees as a "role contraction" over the past 20 years.

<sup>162</sup> Ben-Eliezer, "From Military Role-Expansion to Difficulties in Peace-Making," 138–141; Cohen, "From a 'People's Army' to a 'Professional Military,'" 237–250. According to Cohen, the recent move toward professionalism "will prejudice the military's traditional role as Israel's primary 'melting pot'."

<sup>163</sup> Yoram Peri, "Party-Military Relations in a Pluralist System," in *Israeli Society and Its Defense Establishment: The Social and Political Impact of a Protracted Violent Conflict*, ed. Moshe Lissak (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1984): 47. According to Peri, fear of military ascendancy went back to the Yishuv days. "The relations between the military and the party were...similar to the relationship of the party with other political and administrative structures: subordination, acquiescence. The military appeared to party leaders a potential challenger that must be contained, manipulated and controlled at all times in order to prevent a serious threat to the party monopoly of power."

PM's (i.e., his) control.<sup>164</sup> According to Uri Ben-Eliezer, "a kind of trade-off took place between the political and military elites. The latter obeyed the political leadership and discarded any possible threat to its rule, whereas the politicians gave the young people the freedom to operate according to their own lights."<sup>165</sup>

Ben-Gurion's modus operandi was to exercise a highly dominant, personal rule over the civil-military process (and government, in general). He strictly controlled senior IDF appointments in Israel's early days, even down to levels below flag rank. This enabled him to maintain patronage among party loyalists and protégés, while weeding out those perceived as a potential political threats.<sup>166</sup> Ben-Gurion also sought to limit any semblance of checks on the government's (i.e., HIS) authority to conduct security related policy. This included: 1) an informal decision making process whereby the PM had both extreme flexibility and few limitations,<sup>167</sup> 2) a severely curtailed role for the Knesset's FADC, which was seen purely as an information provider,<sup>168</sup> 3) limiting the functional

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<sup>164</sup> Peri, "Party-Military Relations in a Pluralist System," in *Israeli Society and Its Defense Establishment: The Social and Political Impact of a Protracted Violent Conflict*, 51; Heper and Itzkowitz-Shifrinson, "Civil-military Relations in Israel and Turkey," 232; Zev Schiff, "Fifty Years of Israeli Security: The Central Role of the Defense System," 436. "The various underground forces were dismantled and the Haganah was transformed into the IDF, the sole legal national army." More importantly, Ben-Gurion united the offices of PM and DEFMN under himself and "took care to ensure that the civilian authority would be superior to the military."

<sup>165</sup> Ben-Eliezer, "Rethinking the Civil-military Relations Paradigm," 362; Peri, "Party-Military Relations in a Pluralist System," in *Israeli Society and Its Defense Establishment: The Social and Political Impact of a Protracted Violent Conflict*, 47. Peri's assessment, describing a "complementary elite," concurs with that of Ben-Eliezer. He refers to a second generation of leaders who emerged as the military elite during the early state years, yet maintained close ties with the presiding political leadership. This "led to harmonious relations between the two generations and to the subordination of the military organization to the political institutions."

<sup>166</sup> Peri, "Party-Military Relations in a Pluralist System," in *Israeli Society and Its Defense Establishment: The Social and Political Impact of a Protracted Violent Conflict*, 51–53; Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: Bedford/St Martin's, 2007): 280. During the Yishuv period, rival political parties within the Zionist socialist spectrum each had their own political militia. Following the 1948 war, these were phased out in favor of a unitary (and depoliticized) armed force, inherently wedded to the dominant MAPAI party structure. Leaders associated with HERUT (revisionist/extreme right) and MAPAM (communist-leaning/extreme left), in spite of military accomplishments, were typically denied promotion to senior levels in the IDF based on the prerogative of Ben-Gurion himself. A case in point was Yigal Allon, who was passed over for the CGS position in favor of MAPAI protégé Moshe Dayan.

<sup>167</sup> Yehuda Ben-Meir, *National Security Decisionmaking : The Israeli Case* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986), 100. According to Ben-Meir, Ben-Gurion was an advocate of "constructive ambiguity."

<sup>168</sup> Ben-Meir, *Civil-military Relations in Israel*, 48–49. "The views of its members were listened to, but they had little if any effect on Ben-Gurion."

authority of the MDC,<sup>169</sup> and 4) a separation of the IDF from extraneous support functions, which were summarily transferred to the MOD. The latter aspect was imposed to allow the armed forces to concentrate solely on martial pursuits, and “to free the military from activities that corrupt the moral character of its members.” Ben-Gurion’s mistakenly relied too much on his own personal control and did not formalize this structural interrelationship with a legal standing; as the IDF (over time) gradually encroached on areas of civilian functional responsibility (to include procurement and arms exports).<sup>170</sup>

Ben-Gurion’s policies and approaches can be interpreted as the pragmatic, centrist position within the Israeli political spectrum, as he remained moderate relative to the fringe positions.<sup>171</sup> Additionally, while elevating the IDF on a pedestal as the key element within Israeli society, Ben-Gurion was not afraid to stand up to its leadership when issues of policy primacy came into question. Against CGS Dayan’s wishes, he followed through with the required pullout from the Sinai Desert in 1957, and refused to allow senior IDF members to attend or participate in cabinet meetings during the early

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<sup>169</sup> Ben-Meir, *Civil-military Relations in Israel*, 31; Ben-Meir, *National Security Decisionmaking: The Israeli Case*, 103. While the MDC’s establishment was a concession to junior coalition partners, and was meant to have a measure of influence within security-related decision making, in reality, Ben-Gurion monopolized overall control via his position as both PM and DEFMIN.

<sup>170</sup> Ben-Meir, *Civil-military Relations in Israel*, 88. “According to these guidelines, the IDF would deal with the fighting and preparations for war—i.e., all matters relating to military operations...from strategic to tactical – whereas the MOD would be responsible for the entire fiscal and support system.” This system was effective only so long as forceful control was maintained by the PM, who initially doubled as DEFMIN. Once the two offices were separated, increased coordination was necessary to maintain a united front. If a CGS could play the two leaders against each other (which they often did), it allowed for 1) a policy wedge to be driven between the two leaders, and 2) the IDF to accumulate additional influence.

<sup>171</sup> Heller, “Israel’s Dilemmas,” 22. While typically portrayed as an ardent Zionist bent on wholesale expansion, Ben-Gurion actually fell between Sharett’s left-leaning/accommodationist position and Begin’s goal of creating a “Greater Israel.”

state period.<sup>172</sup> This stance reinforced military subordination to him and, according to Joshua Itzkowitz-Shifrinson, “brought about the IDF’s respect for civilian authority.”<sup>173</sup>

The most notable military figure during the Ben-Gurion era was Moshe Dayan, CGS from 1953–1958. He was of a newer generation of native-born Israeli leaders, and was deemed “independent-minded and insubordinate by nature.”<sup>174</sup> Dayan was a close personal friend and protégé of Ben-Gurion, and considered both a political activist within the Mapai party and an expansionist regarding Israel’s borders. By extension, his appointment to the head of the armed forces could be expected to lead to a politicization of IDF senior leadership.<sup>175</sup> He would remain influential over the next three decades, occupying a number of strategic offices, to include DEFMIN (1967–1974) and Foreign Minister (1977–1979). While his party affiliation changed periodically based on political expediency, his strategic views remained consistent with those articulated by Ben-Gurion.

The first crack in the civil-military facade came with the “Lavon Affair” of 1954. It demonstrated that the relationship between the three key stakeholders (PM, DEFMIN, and CGS) remained subject to personal and political considerations. In this case, recently ascended DEFMIN Pinchas Lavon, was determined to exercise increased/direct

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<sup>172</sup> Zev Schiff, “Fifty Years of Israeli Security: The Central Role of the Defense System,” 436; Peri, “Party-Military Relations in a Pluralist System,” 51. The latter ultimately changed, post 1967, as the CGS, Director of Military Intelligence (DMI) and other senior officers became fixtures at government meetings/deliberations.

<sup>173</sup> Rebecca L. Schiff, “Civil-military Relations Reconsidered: A Theory of Concordance,” 18; Heper and Itzkowitz-Shifrinson, “Civil-military Relations in Israel and Turkey,” 232. It did not hurt that there was a history of close personal, professional and political relationship between military and civilian elites dating back to the Yishuv and early state years.

<sup>174</sup> Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001) 100–101. According to Shlaim, Dayan was overtly political, and “could not be counted upon to respect the supremacy of civilian authority.”

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 100–101. Ben-Eliezer, “Rethinking the Civil-military Relations Paradigm,” 363. According to Ben-Eliezer, “enormous political influence was wielded by the IDF under Chief of Staff, Moshe Dayan, at the time.”

operational control over the IDF.<sup>176</sup> This resulted in friction between Lavon, and 1) Moshe Sharett (Ben-Gurion's short-lived successor as PM) and 2) CGS Dayan. Following fall-out from the 1954 exposure of a covert Israeli spy ring operating in Egypt (unbeknownst to the DEFMIN), senior IDF leaders closed ranks in opposition to Lavon, laying the blame for the fiasco squarely at his feet.<sup>177</sup> Sharett convened an inquiry to ascertain blame regarding the operation's initiation but, despite inconclusive findings, Lavon remained tainted by the affair and resigned.<sup>178</sup> Upon Ben-Gurion's return to office as both PM and DEFMIN in 1955, it became clear that his principle concern was to absolve and protect the military (by extension, Dayan and Shimon Peres) from any culpability in this failure. It was not until 1960 that the magnitude of the fiasco became public, with allegations of perjury leveled at senior members of the IDF.<sup>179</sup>

By the mid-1960s, Ben-Gurion had retired from political life for good, with the party/government reins passed to his successor, Levi Eshkol. While Eshkol had assisted his predecessor in "subjugating the military leadership" under civilian control, he himself had no security background upon which to draw legitimacy in the eyes of the defense

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<sup>176</sup> Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*, 98–99, 105, 108; Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 241. Shlaim takes the position that Lavon had been a poor choice for DEFMIN due to an "unstable character," an unwillingness to accept subordination to the PM, and poor working relations with most of those around him. On the one hand, Lavon attempted to collude with IDF leadership to push forward a punitive, reprisal-oriented policy; while on the other hand, he was unable to exercise effective control over them.

<sup>177</sup> Heper and Itzkowitz-Shifrinson, "Civil-military Relations in Israel and Turkey," 232; Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 241; Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*, 110–112. There were ongoing allegations that IDF intelligence officers knowingly falsified documentation to implicate the DEFMIN as initiator of the spy ring's activity. Lavon subsequently resigned under enormous pressure, yet repeatedly sought exoneration from Israel's political leadership.

<sup>178</sup> Such response to military failure is common among democratic administrations; where civilian leaders are expected to resign. Examples are UK Prime Minister Anthony Eden (after Suez, 1956) and U.S. Secretary of Defense Les Aspin (following Somalia, 1993).

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 122, 211–212. Prominent among these names was COL Binyamin Gibli, head of AMAN (IDF military intelligence) at the time. His position was openly supported by Dayan and Peres.

establishment.<sup>180</sup> Continuing Ben-Gurion's practice of combining both PM and DEFMIN portfolios, he did maintain a cordial working relationship with CGS Yitzhak Rabin, who was given great latitude and de facto autonomy.<sup>181</sup> So long as policy agreement existed with the security sector, there was a measure of stability between the two spheres. Unfortunately, Eshkol's attempts to reform the civil-military system occurred simultaneously with MAPAI party infighting and fragmentation, which painted him as weak on defense issues.<sup>182</sup> This had a detrimental effect on his relations with the military and, coupled with increasing tensions between Israel and its neighbors, reached critical mass in May 1967.

Just prior to the June 1967 War, during a period to be known as the "General's Revolt," PM Eshkol's caution, perceived indecisiveness, and apparent flip-flopping on strategic policy, led to a severe backlash from IDF leaders.<sup>183</sup> The generals demanded swift action to catch the Arab states off-guard, and a "feeling of rebellion was in the air."<sup>184</sup> Eshkol remained firm in his position that "the political echelon will make the

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<sup>180</sup> Arye Naor, "Civil-military Relations and the Strategic Goal Setting in the Six Day War," in *Communicating Security: Civil-military Relations in Israel*, ed. Udi Lebel (New York: Routledge, 2008), 32–33; Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*, 218; Ben-Meir, *National Security Decisionmaking: The Israeli Case*, 103. Eshkol was the quintessential technocrat, rising up through the ranks to become Finance Minister on the way to the Premiership. Despite a lack of direct military service, he had spent Israel's formative years as Ben-Gurion's second-in-command, and was intimately familiar with the inner workings of the state's political system and security domain. In fact, it was during his tenure that the IDF developed much of the capabilities, which would enable such a lopsided victory in the 1967 war.

<sup>181</sup> Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*, 221; Heper and Itzkowitz-Shifrinson, "Civil-military Relations in Israel and Turkey," 238.

<sup>182</sup> Ben-Meir, *National Security Decisionmaking : the Israeli Case*, 103–104; Efraim Inbar, "Israeli National Security, 1973–96," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 555, Israel in Transition (1998): 64. Eshkol attempted to 1) increase the influence of the MDC, which became "in effect a powerful small Cabinet responsible for decisions on security" and 2) establish a U.S.-style, civilian National Security Council (NSC). The former was somewhat successful, although primarily in an advisory function; while the latter was effectively resisted by CGS Rabin (who believed it would be ineffective in the Israeli context, and on whose influence it would have impinged).

<sup>183</sup> Yoram Peri, "Political-military Partnership in Israel," *International Political Science Review/Revue Internationale de Science Politique* 2, no. 3, *Civil-military Relations* (1981): 307–308; Naor, "Civil-military Relations and the Strategic Goal Setting in the Six Day War," 36–39. There was resentment over Eshkol's backing away from pre-emptive strikes in an attempt to elicit support from the United States and Western nations. He "presented the generals with a wider meaning of the concept of planning than they were used to...a concept that takes into consideration national and international political variables."

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 36, 38, 40–41; Ben-Eliezer, "Rethinking the Civil-military Relations Paradigm," 367. It was during this timeframe that Ariel Sharon loudly bemoaned the potential loss of deterrence if an attack was not conducted immediately, while Chaim Weizman (Chief of the Air Force) threatened to resign.

decisions and the military commanders must obey, whether they like it or not.”<sup>185</sup> There was never any concern that IDF leaders would ultimately disobey the elected government; rather, “Israeli generals were deeply involved in politics because of a sincere belief that ‘everything was being ruined’...which endangered the very existence of Israel.”<sup>186</sup> Ultimately, the IDF inadvertently became an actor in the political process as Eshkol was forced to relinquish the DEFMIN portfolio to Moshe Dayan, ending the stand-off but inadvertently hastening the upcoming conflict.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Naor, “Civil-military Relations and the Strategic Goal Setting in the Six Day War,” 37, 40.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 38, 41. According to Naor, “It was not an attempt to overthrow the government. Rather, they wanted to influence the decision making process.”

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 31, 40; Ben-Eliezer, “Rethinking the Civil-military Relations Paradigm,” 367. Ironically, Rabin himself (as CGS) was consulted by political leadership beforehand on his impression of a Dayan appointment as DEFMIN (his own superior). Such informal Political-military discussions were considered quite natural within the Israeli system.

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## V. A PERIOD OF CHANGE: 1967–1992

The 1967 War became, in effect, the watershed point for civil-military relations in Israel. Whereas strong civilian leadership had traditionally been sufficient as a counterbalance to the IDF's growing popularity and influence, the conflict unleashed an entirely new set of variables, which permanently altered the relationship dynamic. Probably the most important/least recognized was the separation of PM and DEFMIN portfolios prior to the war, which allowed for policy and coordination ambiguity. Additionally relevant were: 1) an end of consensus on national security policy, 2) the deterioration of political stability and single-party dominance, 3) weakening of a formerly strong civil-military relationship, and 4) the transformation of the IDF into a vehicle for political mobility.<sup>188</sup> Cumulatively, these had a tremendous effect by enabling the security establishment (intentionally or otherwise) to become more influential in policy making relative to the civilian leadership.

### A. FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES

Eshkol's acquiescence in appointing Dayan as DEFMIN set a precedent by splitting leadership of the key spheres among two individuals. Whereas Ben-Gurion had historically maintained the reins of both during his tenure (the Sharett years were an outlier), this fundamental alteration enabled the military establishment to manipulate one actor against another in its own (perceived) best interests. Unfortunately, attempts to define the new PM-DEFMIN connection were half-hearted, ultimately based more on the nature of personal relationships than legal standing. While it behooved both offices to work closely as a means of aligning policy and mitigating IDF influence, these efforts were typically hit or miss in their effectiveness. Yehuda Ben-Meir provides numerous

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<sup>188</sup> Horowitz, “The Israeli Concept of National Security,” 27–31; Zev Schiff, “Fifty Years of Israeli Security: The Central Role of the Defense System,” 438; Naor, “Civil-military Relations and the Strategic Goal Setting in the Six Day War,” 41–46; Zeev Maoz, *Defending The Holy Land: A Critical Analysis of Israel’s Security & Foreign Policy* (University of Michigan Press, 2006): 521–525; Heller, “Israel’s Dilemmas,” 22–24; Michael, “The Dilemma behind the Classical Dilemma of Civil-military Relations,” 42; Cohen, “Changing Civil-military Relations in Israel,” 773–774; Joel Beinin, “Challenge from Israel’s Military,” *MERIP Reports*, 92, Israel’s Uncertain Future (1980): 6–8.

examples where the bond between the two was akin to partners (Rabin/Peres during 1970s, Begin's early support of his DEFMIN's, etc.), and others where clashes between the two were more prevalent (Sharett/Lavon and Begin/Sharon).<sup>189</sup> It was these latter instances when the security establishment was able to cement inroads into strategic policy making.

The 1967 victory also terminated nearly 20 years of consensus on national security policy, inadvertently encouraging the security establishment to weigh in as expert on one position or the other. Arye Naor demonstrates the unintended contradiction between sweeping tactical victory and eventual strategic failure, pointing out the lack of a civilian planning and support staff ultimately hampered the government's ability to resist IDF calls to push further.<sup>190</sup> He also points out that periods of Dayan's waffling (as DEFMIN) during the conflict allowed the military to expand their objectives beyond initial goals. This resulted in both an increased opportunity cost (in terms of occupation-related expenditures), and a split in public/policy opinion regarding the Occupied Territories.<sup>191</sup> This divergence was a function of the 1967 war, accelerated with the 1973 and 1982 wars, and remains a key factor even to the present.

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<sup>189</sup> Yehuda Ben-Meir, "A Crisis in Civil-military Relations," *The Jerusalem Post* (October 15, 2001: 1); Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 126. Ben-Meir's positive examples also include Meir (PM) and Dayan (DEFMIN), Rabin (PM) and Peres (DEFMIN), and Begin (PM) and Weizman/Sharon (DEFMIN). While party affiliation was certainly a motivating factor in cooperation, it was not always the case, as "politics makes for strange bedfellows." Notably, Shamir (PM) had a very close working relationship with Rabin (DEFMIN) during the late 1980s. On the opposite extreme, disharmony between the two office holders was a function of either, 1) the DEFMIN keeping information from the PM, or 2) the PM opting to conduct policy without consulting with his DEFMIN. The cases of Sharett (PM) and Lavon (DEFMIN) and Begin (PM) and Sharon (DEFMIN) were clear examples of the former, while there were multiple cases of circumventing the DEFMIN or presenting him with a fait accompli (often during the Begin Premiership).

<sup>190</sup> Naor, "Civil-military Relations and the Strategic Goal Setting in the Six Day War," 41–46. According to Naor, "A central planning body, which did not exist, was needed to define the decision making problems present possible options for action, thoroughly analyze pros and cons, and assist leaders in deciding on the preferred options." Therefore, "in the absence of such staff-work...the military has too much influence on the government and national grand strategy."

<sup>191</sup> Heller, "Israel's Dilemmas," 24; Beinin, "Challenge from Israel's Military," 6–9. "The traditional foreign policy consensus that prevailed before 1967 succumbed, over the next two decades, to challenges from two opposite directions. In its place emerged a deep divide between a 'peace camp' and a 'national camp'." This was accompanied by increased military budget outlays to fund the continuing occupation. While U.S. assistance provided some degree of fiscal autonomy for the IDF, the net effect on the population was staggering inflation and a decreased standard of living.

The conflict's aftermath also saw the end of single party stability and dominance, as well as political supremacy over the military. MAPAI/LABOR gradually lost hegemonic control of the state/political system, increasingly relying on the good graces of appointees within the security apparatus to support its policies. With the IDF's status greatly elevated following its recent wartime success, interaction between the two spheres became akin to partnership vice superior/subordinate. According to Stuart Cohen, "for some two decades after the mid-1960s, the relationship of the leading figures in Israel's political, economic and judicial establishments toward the IDF was basically one of symbiosis."<sup>192</sup> In this environment, the defense establishment became tainted by partisanship as it "found itself dragged into internal political disputes within Israel," with rival parties vying to "recruit" senior military officers to their positions.<sup>193</sup> No longer were the armed forces a neutral bystander in the policy-making process, by supporting specific elements within the system they became "the political echelon's partner or antagonist, rather than its instrument."<sup>194</sup> Within 10 years, the fundamental nature of the political landscape would be altered as Likud (the longtime opposition party) would win national elections, propelling Menachem Begin to the Premiership.

Finally, military service became a vehicle/avenue for political mobility, as senior officers began to transition ("parachute") into second careers in the political domain.<sup>195</sup> By the late 1950s/early 1960s, the first generation of IDF leaders were entering the

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<sup>192</sup> Cohen, "Changing Civil-military Relations in Israel," 773–774. This enabled the IDF to exercise an increasingly overt control over the policy making process for the first time.

<sup>193</sup> Zev Schiff, "Fifty Years of Israeli Security: The Central Role of the Defense System," 438; Goldberg, "The Growing Militarization of the Israeli Political System," 24–25; Inbar, "Israeli National Security, 1973–96," 66. Due to perennially low opinion of politicians by the Israeli public, with corresponding high regard for the IDF, attempts to garner military support for given policies was a logical attempt by left and right to capture the centrist vote.

<sup>194</sup> Michael, "Military Knowledge and Weak Civilian Control," 42. It was not until 1978 that the first public outburst from senior IDF leadership against a given political policy was observed. In this case, CGS Raful Eitan pledged *never* to return the Occupied Territory, in direct contradiction to the ongoing Camp David negotiations/agreement.

<sup>195</sup> Ben-Eliezer, "Rethinking the Civil-military Relations Paradigm," 366; Ben-Eliezer, "From Military Role-Expansion to Difficulties in Peace-Making," 148–149; Ben-Dor and Pedahzur, "Civil-military Relations in Israel at the Outset of the Twenty-First Century," in *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns*, 333.

twilight of their service, due to the relatively short duration of military careers.<sup>196</sup> All had spent their formative years in military service and, molded by the mutual experience, this contributed to a natural bridge/ similarity of perspective between the two spheres.<sup>197</sup> While there is some concern that actively serving officers are co-opted in advance by the political process, with the parties “enlisting” those of similar mindset and policy predilection, the practice is simply not looked down upon by Israelis.<sup>198</sup> In fact, three senior IDF leaders went on to become PM’s (Rabin, Barak and Sharon), while eight rose to DEFMIN (Dayan, Weizman, Rabin, Sharon, Mordechai, Ben-Eliezer, Mofaz and Barak). On the whole, parachuting led to a rapid increase in the number of military officers participating in the government throughout the 1960s and 1970s, but the percentage has leveled off and remained stable since that point (see Figure 11<sup>199</sup>).

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<sup>196</sup> Zev Schiff, “Fifty Years of Israeli Security: The Central Role of the Defense System,” 436; Heper and Itzkowitz-Shifrinson, “Civil-military Relations in Israel and Turkey,” 236–237; “Every Officer knew that he Would have to Begin a Civilian Career after not too many Years.”

<sup>197</sup> Inbar, “Israeli National Security, 1973–96,” 64, 66; Ben-Eliezer, “Rethinking the Civil-military Relations Paradigm,” 366. According to Ben-Eliezer, the unique bond between the two elites is the “conception that politics in Israel is a continuation of military service, that the difference between the two spheres is not great—Israel’s security being the common ground.” While the end result is both nuanced and debatable, there is certainly merit to the logic.

<sup>198</sup> Heper and Itzkowitz-Shifrinson, “Civil-military Relations in Israel and Turkey,” 235; Ben-Eliezer, “From Military Role-Expansion to Difficulties in Peace-Making,” 148. MAPAI/LABOR has traditionally been more successful in attracting retiring officers, a function of historical monopolization of the senior officer appointment process. Ben-Eliezer also provides comparable examples in both Prussian Germany and Imperial Japan. In the case of Israel, however, there is belief that the rapid turnover in military leadership prevents the forming of a junta, which could threaten civil government.

<sup>199</sup> Goldberg, “The Growing Militarization of the Israeli Political System,” 17–19.

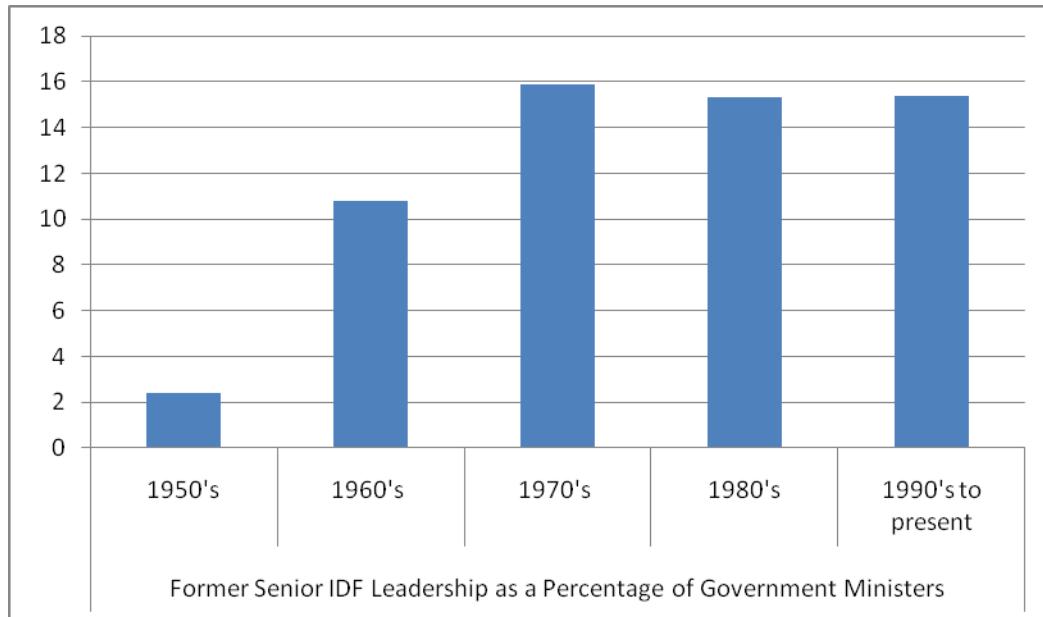


Figure 11. Former Senior IDF Leadership as a Percentage of Government Ministers

While the worldwide phenomenon of former military leaders moving into government service is not uncommon, the proportional rate of accession in Israel would (on the surface) appear unusual. It presents the impression that there is an inherent civil-military connection, through which politics is a logical progression of military service. In reality, there needs to be a differentiation between civilian leaders who have fulfilled minimum service obligations (i.e., the result of standard conscription) and those who have extended years of experience serving in senior positions of military responsibility. Additionally, the claim of Israeli militarization and collusion between the spheres (on the whole) is likely overblown, as senior officers entering the political domain are rarely of a single mindset (little different from their military service) or desire to monopolize the system.<sup>200</sup>

Throughout the 1970s, Israel struggled to come to terms with the rising influence of its armed forces, particularly in the aftermath of the deeply troubling 1973 War. While

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<sup>200</sup> Lissak, “The Unique Approach to Military-societal Relations in Israel,” 249. Lissak goes to great lengths to refute claims of endemic militarism within Israeli society, and the IDF, in particular. His argument centers on the issue of pluralism within IDF leadership, during and post-service. He posits that “IDF General Staff and Senior officers rarely formulate a unified position on any substantive military-strategic issue,” and “retired officers who go into politics are found at almost every shade of the spectrum.”

senior IDF leaders expanded their role into diplomatic venues during the disengagement and peace processes, serious flaws in the system were observed and publicized.<sup>201</sup> The 1973–74 Agranat Commission noted glaring deficiencies in civil-military delineation and superior/subordinate relationships, calling for an expanded effort to remove ambiguity between the spheres.<sup>202</sup> It was not 1976's passage of "Basic Law: The Army" that an attempt was made to provide legal foundation for such improvements.<sup>203</sup> According to Amir Bar-Or and Yehuda Ben-Meir, respectively, the legislation "intended to define formally and explicitly Israel's political-military relations," and "firmly established constitutional principle of civilian control over the military."<sup>204</sup> While successful at a macro level, the effort intentionally avoided many complex issues, ultimately failing to correct significant deficiencies. Notably, while re-affirming civil authority, it neglected to define key roles and relationships, leaving the primary actors (PM, DEFMIN, and CGS) with sufficient "wiggle room" to avoid any distinct loss of influence. Additionally, the issue of politics was sidestepped, "deliberately formulated to allow a high degree of military involvement...without either endorsing or preventing it."<sup>205</sup> It was not until 1979's Military Justice Law that the CGS's carte blanche authority for unilateral action was rescinded, requiring future approval from the DEFMIN himself.

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<sup>201</sup> Ben-Dor and Pedahzur, "Civil-military Relations in Israel at the Outset of the Twenty-First Century," in *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns*, 333–334; Lebel, "Civil Society Versus Military Sovereignty," 73. Called upon to assist with the strategic issues of security, peace policy and boundary determination, the IDF increased its already substantial influence. Lebel refers to the period as Israel's "political era," but it was 1967, which clearly initiated the process.

<sup>202</sup> Ben-Meir, *National Security Decisionmaking: The Israeli Case*, 108; Maoz, *Defending the Holy Land: A Critical Analysis of Israel's Security & Foreign Policy*, 143, 169. IDF leadership, particularly CGS David Elazar, was highly critical of the commission's findings. It was their opinion that blame for the war was levied solely against military leadership, absolving the civilian government of any fault in the matter. It was only due to the resulting public backlash that PM Meir and DEFMIN Dayan ultimately resigned in 1974.

<sup>203</sup> Ben-Meir, *Civil-military Relations in Israel*, 31, 35, 41–42, 45, 56, 67; Heper and Itzkowitz-Shifrinson, "Civil-military Relations in Israel and Turkey," 235–236; Bar-Or, "Political-military Relations in Israel, 1996–2003," 365–367.

<sup>204</sup> Bar-Or, "Political-military Relations in Israel, 1996–2003," 365–366; Ben-Meir, *Civil-military Relations in Israel*, 35–36. Bar-Or further elaborates on Basic Law: The Army, stating it "implies that the government, as a collective body, is the indisputable supreme commander."

<sup>205</sup> Bar-Or, "Political-military Relations in Israel, 1996–2003," 366; Peri, "Political-military Partnership in Israel," 311.

A further compounding of the situation occurred in 1977, with Likud's momentous wresting of political hegemony away from the long faltering MAPAI/LABOR coalition.<sup>206</sup> While demonstrating the successful transition of democratic power, the effect on national security issues was substantial. In essence, it, 1) completed the fragmentation of strategic consensus, which had begun in 1967 and 2) further tinged the IDF as a political player. Dan Horowitz opines, “dependence of strategic decisions on politics and ideology undermined the autonomous standing of the defense establishment, which in the past had been able to formulate security doctrines and policies acceptable to holders of disparate and even opposing political views.”<sup>207</sup> Even more challenging, Likud leadership was unable to appoint like-minded officers within the senior IDF hierarchy, as the preponderance of candidates owed their allegiance and positions to the time-honored tradition of Labor party patronage.<sup>208</sup> This had clear implications on civil-military relations, as PM Begin was confronted with a defense establishment who initially saw security-related issues from a different perspective than his own.

No one symbolized the changing civil-military dynamic more than Begin himself. As an anachronistic throwback to the days of Ben-Gurion’s cult of power politics, the new PM led by gut instinct and left little room for divergence of opinion or purpose. Begin had always been an opposition leader, and while lacking in formal military experience, he was wise enough to surround himself with subject matter experts.<sup>209</sup> There was a stubborn willingness to stand up to the military or the government on strategic

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<sup>206</sup> Ben-Meir, *National Security Decisionmaking: The Israeli Case*, 111. This was known as “the turnaround” (mahapach), and “resulted in the most dramatic change in the political scene since the creation of the state.”

<sup>207</sup> Horowitz, “The Israeli Concept of National Security,” 30.

<sup>208</sup> Heper and Itzkowitz-Shifrinson, “Civil-military Relations in Israel and Turkey,” 236. According to Itzkowitz-Shifrinson, “the military’s top echelons did not share the political views of the civilian leadership—which was often the case during the Likud governments in 1977–1992.” That said, at no point was the specter of a military rebellion present, as officers accepted their responsibility to the security of the state first and foremost.

<sup>209</sup> Ben-Meir, *National Security Decisionmaking: The Israeli Case*, 111–115; Inbar, “Israeli National Security, 1973–96,” 64–65. Begin’s experience in the Irgun (a paramilitary/terrorist group) is well documented. After coming to power during the 1977 elections, he initially chose former military leaders Chaim Weizman, Moshe Dayan, and (later) Ariel Sharon to guide his policies.

issues, as Begin dismissed various attempts to sidetrack the Camp David process.<sup>210</sup> Over time, Dayan and Weizman (moderate holdovers from the Labor days) would clash with him on policy and depart the administration, leaving new DEFMIN Ariel Sharon with increasing influence and power. This transformation, coupled with an extremely activist CGS (in the person of Rafael Eitan), contributed to the 1982 Israeli fiasco in Lebanon.<sup>211</sup>

By the 1980s, the IDF had begun to experience a decline in status at several levels. A growing antagonism between the military and society, coupled with a spate of overzealous DEFMINS, certainly played a part in this trend. That said, it was the move away from the earlier concept of “ein brera” (no choice), which left the most notable impact on civil-military relations.<sup>212</sup> Rather than engaging in conflicts, which sought to assure the nation’s very survival, a function of maintaining status quo stability, the new generation of military actions were considered “wars of choice.” In the case of Lebanon, PM Begin justified incursion “in order to avoid a costlier, more terrible war in the future.”<sup>213</sup> This mindset not only terminated long-standing strategic doctrine, but resulted in greater autonomy for the military establishment, who were now able to drive policy based purely on force application. According to Horowitz, “the ‘partnership’ between the

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<sup>210</sup> Peri, “Party-military Relations in a Pluralist System,” 50–51. Begin’s dichotic approach could be demonstrated in a willingness to stand up to CGS Motta Gur on returning Sinai land to Egypt, yet an unwillingness to carry the peace effort to any logical conclusion with the Palestinians.

<sup>211</sup> Cohen, “Changing Civil-military Relations in Israel,” 772; Beinin, “Challenge from Israel’s Military,” 7; Maoz, *Defending the Holy Land: A Critical Analysis of Israel’s Security & Foreign Policy*, 518; Michael, “Military Knowledge and Weak Civilian Control,” 29, 33. Eitan (CGS from 1978–1983) was one of the longest serving heads of the IDF. As the architect of the 1982 Lebanon invasion, he combined efforts with new DEFMIN Sharon to go well and above PM Begin’s initial goals. Eitan, therefore, came to symbolize the growing dominance of the military network relative to the civilian government. He not only fought any attempts to cut defense spending, but sought to increase the IDF’s role within society writ large. Finally, Eitan ushered in a practice of utilizing the media to express (unauthorized) commentary on the approval/disapproval of civilian policy. This practice had (and still has) a significant impact on Israeli public opinion, who (according to Kobi Michael’s Discourse Space Model) instinctively defer to the military as the “epistemic authority” on broadly defined security-related matters.

<sup>212</sup> Ben-Eliezer, “From Military Role-Expansion to Difficulties in Peace-Making,” 151–156; Ben-Dor and Pedahzur, “Civil-military Relations in Israel at the Outset of the Twenty-First Century,” in *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns*, 340; Heller, “Israel’s Dilemmas,” 21–23; Zev Schiff, “Fifty Years of Israeli Security: The Central Role of the Defense System,” 440; Horowitz, “The Israeli Concept of National Security,” 41. Horowitz summarizes this new approach as actions “intended to be fought with the expressed purpose of achieving political aims unconnected to any concept of prevention.”

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 41; Horowitz, “Israel’s War in Lebanon,” 93–95. This shift from defensive to offensive strategy had obvious implications for the maintenance of Israel’s status quo position. According to the new construct, “Israel initiates war when her military might is at its peak and when strategic environmental conditions are optimal for exploiting opportunities.”

military and civilian systems was replaced with manipulation of the civilian system by the defense establishment, exploiting the latter's professional authority to dictate policies to the government.”<sup>214</sup>

With the onset of 1987’s Palestinian popular uprising (the “First Intifada”), the IDF continued its divergent relationship with civilian leadership, resulting in a period of finger-pointing and blame reminiscent of the post-1973 era. Civilian policymakers, particularly DEFMIN Rabin, sought to utilize the IDF to “break the bones” of demonstrators to eradicate the movement via brute force. Senior military leadership (under CGS Dan Shomron) came to the early realization that such actions would entail crossing a moral line, which violated western norms. The CGS openly broke with civil policy established by the PM and DEFMIN, making his apprehensions publically known. The government hence laid the blame for an inability to quash the rebellion squarely on the shoulders of the defense establishment, while Shomron argued that proscribed directives were not consistent with realities on the ground.<sup>215</sup> This reflected the growing divide in Israeli society on the question of the Territories, and further reinforced the vital nature of military cooperation in security policy determination. Yoram Peri states, “the IDF...situated itself on the left within the new political discourse that arose in the wake of the intifada.”<sup>216</sup> This greatly influenced a new willingness to consider peace as an opportunity to achieve manageable security, playing a behind-the-scenes role within the Oslo process.

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<sup>214</sup> Horowitz, “Israel’s War in Lebanon,” 99. Horowitz further expressed concern by indicating “doubts regarding the efficacy of the control mechanisms which enable the political level to supervise the actions of the civilian and military echelons of the defense establishment.”

<sup>215</sup> Yoram Peri, “Civil-military Relations in Israel in Crisis,” in *Military, State and Society in Israel: Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*, ed. Daniel Maman, Eyal Ben-Ari, and Zeev Rosenhek (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2001), 111; Yoram Peri, *The Israeli Military and Israel’s Palestinian Policy: From Oslo to the Al Aqsa Intifada* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 2002), 5–62, June 1, 2009, <http://www.usip.org/pubs/peaceworks/pwks47.pdf> (accessed June 1, 2009), 26. Shomron deeply resented policy objectives that the IDF could not hope to achieve. He believed that force could only slow (not stop) the rebellion, and that only a political solution would be viable in achieving a long-term resolution.

<sup>216</sup> Peri, “The Political-military Complex,” 326; Yoram Peri, *The Israeli Military and Israel’s Palestinian Policy*, 14–15; Inbar, “Israeli National Security, 1973–96,” 69.

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## VI. POST-OSLO: THE LINGERING EFFECTS OF POLITICS, PERSONALITIES AND THE PEACE PROCESS

With the end of the Cold War, a new geopolitical paradigm emerged for Israel, significantly impacting its civil-military relations and policy making. After 40+ years of unremitting conflict, senior IDF leadership experienced a shift in the balance of judgment regarding the feasibility of a permanent peace deal with their Arab neighbors. This could be attributed to a confluence of opportunistic circumstances, to include: 1) lessons learned from the 1<sup>st</sup> Intifada, 2) the Soviet Union's demise, and 3) the defeat of Iraq in Operation DESERT STORM.<sup>217</sup> Israel's evolving strategic position thus brought into focus relations between the nation's political *and* military spheres, with particular attention paid to *both* the peace process and interaction within the strategic triumvirate of PM, DEFMIN and CGS. Surprisingly, the latter acted as a de facto driving force behind the push for peace and normalization with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). This is certainly in line with perceptions that the armed forces continued to dominate and influence the overall nature of Israel's strategic partnership.

The ongoing government-military volatility continued as a function of the relationship imbalance and permeability between the two spheres (in favor of the IDF). While periodic power struggles have sought to restore the elected government's hierarchical control over the military, "the ability of the IDF to influence government policy has reflected an Israeli acceptance of a civil-military structure that," in the judgment of some observers, has "assigned undue influence to the IDF's policy demands relative to those of other branches of government."<sup>218</sup> As such, political deference to the military has crystallized into an enduring hallmark of the Israeli system, with little sign of change evident over the short-medium term.

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<sup>217</sup> Peri, "The Political-military Complex," 325–326, 329–333; Peri, *The Israeli Military and Israel's Palestinian Policy*, 14–16. The military thus assessed peace as a "strategic asset," as the earlier accords with Egypt had enabled the IDF to reduce force structure and begin to shift future posture toward a "small, smart army."

<sup>218</sup> Heper and Itzkowitz-Shifrinson, "Civil-military Relations in Israel and Turkey," 234.

## A. OSLO AND THE HOPES FOR PEACE (1992–1996)

The magnitude and duration of 1987's Intifada came as a significant surprise to Israeli leadership (civilian and military), further cementing the doctrinal shift from "war between states" to "war between nations."<sup>219</sup> It perpetuated (and deepened) the armed forces' primacy in civil administration and military control of the Occupied Territories, demonstrating that conventional force application is not necessarily effective in quelling popular uprisings having no singular, defined infrastructure. Concurrently, images of heavily armed troops confronting rock-throwing protestors negatively affected both political and security reality; ultimately, shifting the IDF's outlook and position firmly into the peace camp.<sup>220</sup>

The 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union also impacted the process by extinguishing material support to the Arab States; thereby, removing potential Syrian aggression from the threat equation. As former enemies became conventionally impotent, and the Soviets no longer provided external incitement/interference, Israel was now able to turn its attention away from purely "traditional" sources of danger. Territorial acquisition, therefore, lost its inherent value as a bargaining chip, with the destruction of military equipment (no longer replaceable) now ascending in importance.<sup>221</sup>

Finally, the issue of Iraqi SCUD attacks prompted dissension over how to address the issue of long-range threats in the hands of distant enemies while simultaneously assuaging U.S.' coalition-related concerns. While there were calls for direct response within certain elements of the IDF's leadership, cooler heads prevailed on the issue of

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<sup>219</sup> Peri, *The Israeli Military and Israel's Palestinian Policy*, 14–15. The former was a function of conventional war between sovereign nations for territory, security and survival. Early Israeli strategist focused on this aspect of the struggle, believing that defeating external Arab threats would result in begrudging acceptance of Israel's right to exist. The latter perspective argued that it was the Israeli-Palestinian issue that lay at the problem's root cause, and that no amount of conventional capability would be able to eradicate the Palestinians desire to regain their land/rights.

<sup>220</sup> Yoram Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2006), 31. Peri states that the very nature of Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) and counter-insurgency warfare is inherently politically-related, as it vies to destroy the will and commitment of a particular population segment to fight (rather than conventional forces). In the Israeli case, the IDF gradually drifted from the hardliner rhetoric and policies of Yitzchak Shamir's right-wing government, which exacerbated tensions by strategically stalling the peace process.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 38–39.

restraint.<sup>222</sup> The ultimate defeat of Saddam Hussein's military, coupled with a dramatic shift in Syria's geopolitical position (joining the coalition *against* Iraq),<sup>223</sup> demonstrated that an analytical rethinking of strategic depth was required. Peri states, "these changes in Israel's circumstances opened the window of opportunity for a diplomatic accord," and that "in order to enhance preparedness for a possible confrontation with 'second circle' states, Israel would need to reach a political accommodation with its 'first circle' neighbours, even at the cost of territorial assets."<sup>224</sup>

Coming on the heels of the ineffective Madrid Conference, the existence of a secretive Oslo process itself was initially withheld from the IDF's leadership.<sup>225</sup> Yitzchak Rabin (PM and DEFMIN) tended to keep his cards very close-hold, a function of: 1) inherent leaks within Israeli bureaucracy, 2) a desire to avoid being forced into a specific bargaining position (by the Palestinians), and 3) a fear of potential political and public backlash should the process ultimately fail. This was compounded by intransigence on the part of CGS Barak, who was adamantly opposed to direct negotiations with the Palestinians (a traditional Israeli political-military divergence). Barak's concerns were based on two specific criteria, 1) a belief that the proposed agreement held simply too many security loopholes and that 2) peace initiatives with Syria offered far more strategic benefit to Israel.<sup>226</sup> That said, once a deal had been reached with the PLO, the IDF

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<sup>222</sup> Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy*, 42–43; Peri, "Civil-military Relations in Israel in Crisis," 118; Peri, "The Political-military Complex," 329. Senior defense officials fell on both sides of the fence regarding responses to Saddam Hussein's SCUD strikes against Israel. This demonstrated the fractured, non-unified nature decision making behind the scenes. While the DEFMIN (Arens) and Deputy CGS (Barak) advocated strong retaliation, the CGS (Shomron) won the issue, convincing PM Shamir to refrain from counter-strikes.

<sup>223</sup> Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, 33.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 32; Peri, "The Political-military Complex," 325. The emergence of longer-ranged weapons made achieving peaceful relations with immediate neighbors of paramount importance for Israel. As the "2nd tier" of adversaries was not constrained by geographical proximity, they became much more difficult to combat effectively. As such, removing closer threats would free up additional forces and funding for high-tech defense initiatives.

<sup>225</sup> Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, 63–64; Stuart A. Cohen. "Changing Civil-military Relations in Israel," 776. It was Rabin's opinion that the process was predicated on a "political and ideological" foundation, outside the purview of military matters/concern.

<sup>226</sup> Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, 64–65. On the former, Barak felt "the absence of military experts at once resulted in numerous 'security loopholes' that could harm Israel in the future." Whereas the latter was concerned, removing Syria as the most immediate threat would greatly improve Israel's negotiating position vis-à-vis the Palestinians (requiring less concessions be considered).

became deeply involved in the political aspects of negotiation, planning and implementation of the agreement over the remainder of the decade. This was a function of the organization's inherent capability to conduct both intelligence gathering/assessment and strategic policy formulation, both of which were virtually non-existent in the government domain.<sup>227</sup>

As noted, IDF leadership gradually came to accept the nature of the new geopolitical environment over time, pushing for peace as a means to an end (i.e., *security*). This change of heart was certainly *not* a function of altruism toward the Palestinians, but resulted from a narrow, realistic perspective, which “views peace not as a primary goal, but first and foremost as a means of attaining security.”<sup>228</sup> Alternatively stated, “the willingness of Israel’s political-military leadership to grant the Palestinian leadership territorial and political benefits arose out of an expectation that in exchange Israel would be more secure.”<sup>229</sup> Over time, the failure of the Oslo process can, in part, be attributed to the self-fulfilling and cyclical nature of this approach (coupled with changes in both leadership perspective and personalities).

## B. DISHARMONY WITH BIBI (1996–1999)

By 1996, the peace process had lurched to a halt in the wake of Yitzchak Rabin’s assassination, coupled with Shimon Peres’ inability to address the deteriorating security

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<sup>227</sup> Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, 20–25. Israeli civilian bureaucracy simply never developed an affinity or aptitude for conducting the planning and staff-work necessary for strategic policy formulation. As such, the military’s Strategic Plans Division and Military Intelligence Department (MID) undertook the role of providing insight on a wide range of matters (to include those of military and non-military focus), while attempting to interpret vague policy directives issued by the civilian leadership. The latter was always a source of consternation to the military sphere, illustrated in the statement “we were forced to estimate, to guess, to make predictions of the leaders’ intentions.”

<sup>228</sup> Peri, “The Political-military Complex,” 338; Peri, *The Israeli Military and Israel’s Palestinian Policy*, 6–7. Despite playing a part in the political evolution resulting from the Oslo process, the IDF never lost sight of its primary mission. As was stated, “our responsibility is to deal first and foremost with security arrangements.”

<sup>229</sup> Peri, “The Political-military Complex,” 338.

situation adequately.<sup>230</sup> Binyamin Netanyahu subsequently rode a right-wing national security plank into office as PM, determined to both kill off Oslo implementation and reform, which he saw as excessive military influence in the political sphere.<sup>231</sup> Netanyahu long had a critical attitude toward IDF leadership due to a (not unfounded) perception of its inordinate influence in the political and policy-making domain, as well as ongoing support of the peace process.<sup>232</sup> He was also openly displeased with the IDF's record on quelling violence and its poor recent operational results, going so far as to associate the entire military sphere with the opposition LABOR party.<sup>233</sup> It was his belief that the military should remain focused on training for conflict, and remove itself from political activity and policy influence.

Netanyahu's goal, therefore, was to reform the nebulous relationship between the nation's security triad, expanding the role of civilian government at the military's expense. He shunted aside military leadership as often as possible, while seeking to create a more "civilianized" national security apparatus under his own control (by resurrecting the National Security Council concept). While somewhat effective in cutting the IDF out of legislative consultation and influence, the overall initiative was ultimately watered down, serving mainly to exacerbate tensions between the two spheres (with little

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<sup>230</sup> Rabin's death highlighted the growing (and systemic) lack of unity within Israel's population. While Peres attempted to maintain his predecessor's momentum, he was fatally hampered by a lack of military legitimacy and significantly deteriorating security situation. While he sought to capitalize on 1996's Operation GRAPES OF WRATH to elevate his public perception as tough on violence perpetrated against Israel (in this case, by Hezbollah), the plan ultimately backfired, leading to the election of Likud's Binyamin Netanyahu.

<sup>231</sup> Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, 77–78. Netanyahu made no bones about his view that any concessions to the Palestinians (even in the name of peace) compromised Israeli security.

<sup>232</sup> Peri, *The Israeli Military and Israel's Palestinian Policy*, 25; Peri, "The Political-military Complex," 332; Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, 77–90; Bar-Or, "Political-military Relations in Israel, 1996–2003," 367–371; Lissak, "The Unique Approach to Military-societal Relations in Israel," 250. According to Peri, "Netanyahu's rise to power in 1996 altered the relationship between the government...and the military, which wished to continue to the peace process." He further assesses that "this was the first time in Israel's history that the IDF's upper echelon's and the country's political leaders were so deeply divided over Israel's security requirements."

<sup>233</sup> Peri, "Civil-military Relations in Israel in Crisis," 111–113. Peri refers to this section in his work as "The IDF does not Deliver the Goods," and I believe this is an accurate summation of the multiple blunders, failures to achieve objectives, and training mishaps which characterized the period of the mid to late 1990s. Whether a function of decreasing budget, evolving tactics and doctrine, or a growing sense of lethargy, it compounded the growing public discord between the Prime Minister and IDF leadership (with resulting barbs and blame hurled in both directions).

tangible result).<sup>234</sup> Military leadership chaffed under an operating environment where they were forced to interpret nebulous (oft-contradictory) policies, in whose formulation they were typically neither included nor consulted.<sup>235</sup> Over time, it became clear that the new arrangement was simply not viable, as Israel's civilian government lacked the capacity to produce a level of staff work and policy planning comparable with the military establishment; forcing Netanyahu to relent.<sup>236</sup> As the administration increasingly relied on political vilification of the IDF for the failed implementation of poorly conceived policies, the stage was set for an eventual showdown between the Prime Minister and CGS.<sup>237</sup>

At the center of this melee was GCS Ammon Lipkin-Shahak, a popular figure, protégé of Yitzchak Rabin, and supporter of peace with the Palestinians. As a career officer, Shahak had risen through the ranks, ascending to the highest position in the IDF. Unfortunately, his pragmatic desire to see a continuation of Rabin's peace process brought him into direct contention with Netanyahu's revisionist perspective. The unstable

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<sup>234</sup> Bar-Or, "Political-military Relations in Israel, 1996–2003," 368. "The Basic Law: Government" authorized the creation of such an entity, which would have amassed various additional security functions under the PM's Office, offsetting the IDF's influence in the making of security policy. In the end, however, DEFMIN Mordechai succeeded in downsizing the organization, which 1) wound up falling under his auspices and 2) had little real capacity to affect strategy or policy formulation.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 369; Peri, "Civil-military Relations in Israel in Crisis," 117–122. Bar-Or mentions systemic frustration, stating, "the fact that military figures were no longer 'in the game' consigned them to the awkward position of having to provide military solutions for political contingencies that they were not consulted for in the first place." Peri describes a period where the government and IDF flip-flopped roles related to security and policy. The latter became the voice of pragmatism, seeking to curtail Netanyahu's unbridled/revisionist ideology, going so far as to utilize media "leaks" openly to shed light on what were perceived as dangerous courses of action.

<sup>236</sup> Ben-Meir, *National Security Decisionmaking: The Israeli Case*, 67–71, 75, 84–85; Peri, "The Israeli Military and Israel's Palestinian Policy," 25; Peri, "Civil-military Relations in Israel in Crisis," 113–114. "Not many months passed before he came to understand that without the military he lacked the knowledge, tools and ability to conduct political-security negotiations." Ben-Meir paints this as a pattern of ongoing, systemic dysfunction on the part of civilian leadership, deferring to the military for all essential planning and staffwork. That said, it was during this period that a general IDF "role contraction" was underway, as noted by Peri and Cohen.

<sup>237</sup> Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, 77–90. Bar-Or, "Political-military Relations in Israel, 1996–2003," 368–370. Issues relating to Hebron "re-deployments" and the opening of an ancient tunnel in the Jerusalem's Muslim Quarter were but a few examples of policy dissension between the two entities. The IDF was typically kept in the dark regarding government plans until the last moment, with little opportunity for input or rebuttal.

relationship between the two progressively worsened, with constant criticisms publicly traded in the media. Netanyahu eventually cast aside Shahak in favor of Shaul Mofaz, seen (*initially*) as a malleable, non-political actor.<sup>238</sup>

While a significant portion of the Shahak-Netanyahu friction related to the latter's inherent distrust of IDF, there was likely also fear of a potential, future political challenge should the CGS opt for a government career. This unusual nuance of the command relationship between the two spheres was a long recognized function of the permeability between the entities. As post-career movement into politics was common for senior IDF officers, and those with differing goals from the sitting Prime Minister/government could (and often would) have their credibility openly called into question.<sup>239</sup>

By the eve of the 1999 elections, the situation between the military and government had deteriorated so significantly that a concerted effort was made by reserve and retired officers to foment/contribute to a Netanyahu loss (in favor of former CGS Ehud Barak). While it was certainly not uncommon for high-ranking military officials to join political parties upon transitioning into public life, the two traditional paths were via political apprenticeship and political entrepreneurship.<sup>240</sup> In the latest case, two groupings ("One Israel" and "Center Party") were created with the expressed goal of opposing an existing government, for the first time in Israel's history.<sup>241</sup> While none of the officers were (at the time) on active duty, and there had been no move to overtly/militarily displace the sitting Prime Minister; a collective desire to rid Israel of a perceived security threat (i.e., Netanyahu) mobilized a significant number of senior

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<sup>238</sup> Bar-Or, "Political-military Relations in Israel, 1996–2003," 370. According to Bar-Or, very few CGS's managed to avoid becoming enmeshed in political matters, but Mofaz would ultimately demonstrate one of the most active involvements in IDF history.

<sup>239</sup> Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, 87–89. Netanyahu sought to smear the CGS by calling into question his political neutrality (a hallmark of the position). Ultimately, the tit-for-tat exchanges did eventually push Shahak into politics, where he adopted a centrist position in an effort "to continue Rabin's interrupted enterprise."

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 82–83. Peri provides examples of both avenues into politics. The former, a more traditional route, occurred when noteworthy politicians took senior military leaders under their wing, cultivating the next generation within the party hierarchy. Examples of this included Moshe Dayan, Chaim Bar-Lev, and Yitzchak Rabni for MAPAI/LABOR, and Ezer Weizman for LIKUD. In the latter case, a few enterprising individual struck out on their own to form entirely new parties (i.e., Ariel Sharon, in the early 1970s).

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 83. The former supported Labor's Ehud Barak, and was comprised of numerous high-ranking officers. The latter was headed by former DEFMIN Yitzchak Mordechai, and recently retired CGS Shahak.

officers to engage in direct support of opposition parties. Although this “putsch” was certainly not the sole factor behind Bibi Netanyahu’s fall from power, it did emphasize that: 1) divergence over policy, coupled with 2) personality differences, and 3) security-related concerns, *could* lead to pushback from the senior elements in the military sphere.<sup>242</sup>

### C. THE IDF PULLS A 180 ON PEACE (1999–2002)

With the nearly simultaneous arrival of Ehud Barak and Shaul Mofaz on the scene, it was expected that relations between the government and military would improve significantly, coupled with a renewed drive toward lasting peace with the Palestinians.<sup>243</sup> With the former assuming the dual role of Prime Minister *and* Defense minister, the CGS was initially afforded wide latitude in his position as “commander of the army.”<sup>244</sup> The two came to a tacit arrangement whereby Mofaz would “handle military affairs without interference by civilians, and the Prime Minister would manage the state without military opposition.”<sup>245</sup> In theory, this plan would provide a workable compromise whereby the primary civil-military actors would each function simultaneously, in a de facto vacuum.

Unfortunately, the honeymoon was short-lived, as senior IDF leadership soon expressed frustration with policy determinations, which ran counter to *their* position on national security. It became apparent that political pressures (both internal and external) were pushing the Israeli government in a particular direction, which presented grave

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<sup>242</sup> Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, 77–90. Peri clearly articulates that the number of senior officers involved exceeded 100. Notable among these were former DEFMIN Mordechai and newly retired CGS Shahak. These reservists and retirees not only supported opposition parties (such as LABOR), but specifically organized new groups and served in multiple political roles (from organizing to public statements and advertising) to assure Netanyahu was not re-elected.

<sup>243</sup> Bar-Or, “Political-military Relations in Israel, 1996–2003,” 370. Mofaz’s assumption of command during a relative quiet period in relations with the Palestinians led his aspirations of being the “Peace CGS.” It was his hope this would allow for a renewed focus on training and improvement of the IDF.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 370. It is important to note that in the Israeli model, the term implied subordination to the government. This can be contrasted with a blanket “commander-in-chief of the army” designation, bestowed solely upon elected leadership.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., 371. This presented Mofaz with the opportunity to function as de facto Defense Minister, as Barak’s attention tended to focus on political matters (at home and abroad).

concern to the military establishment. They perceived relative and actual weakening of the Israeli security position due to their lack of involvement in the process, running concurrently with an increase in asymmetric violence against the Jewish State.

Notable among these policy discrepancies were: 1) the decision to unilaterally withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000, 2) the Prime Minister's (un)willingness to negotiate a *full* departure from the Golan Heights, and 3) the use of force to suppress rising levels Palestinian violence.<sup>246</sup> Barak had publicly promised a Lebanon withdrawal during his 1999 election campaign, but the increasing frequency of Hezbollah attacks, and number of casualties, necessitated he move more rapidly than had been anticipated. While there was nominal support for such an undertaking among elements of the military, Mofaz resented: 1) the fait accompli with which he was presented, 2) the immediacy of the action (i.e., overnight), and 3) the potential long-term effect it would have on Israeli security and deterrence. Whereas Syria and the Golan were concerned, senior IDF leadership became angered when Barak was ultimately unwilling to abide by a tacit agreement to withdraw from the Golan fully in exchange for peace, based on fears of domestic political backlash. The military saw this as running counter to the inherent notion of national security, a function of a fatally fragmented and paralyzed government process.<sup>247</sup>

Most importantly, the inexorable slide to violence during the late 1990s, punctuated by a spate of deadly suicide bombings (coupled with a fear of decreased Israeli deterrent capability), gradually fomented a policy swap between civilian and military spheres. While peace-leaning elements within IDF leadership had held sway over military strategy during the earlier days of optimism, a growing segment had come to view the deteriorating security environment as untenable. Upon the failure of the 2000 Camp David meetings, and subsequent outbreak of the “2<sup>nd</sup> Intifada,” the Israeli military and government positional shift had become complete. According to Yoram Peri, “Just as

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<sup>246</sup> Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, 93–96; Bar-Or, “Political-military Relations in Israel, 1996–2003,” 371. The IDF became increasingly alarmed at what it perceived as the erosion of its posture and capabilities based on political concessions.

<sup>247</sup> Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, 94. The failed peace entreaty to Syria was seen by many in the IDF as “a victory of internal political considerations over considerations of security and the state.”

the beginning of the 1990s the military had shown a willingness to make far-reaching concessions in order to reach a settlement with the Palestinians, at the end of the 1990s it pressed for severe measures to counter the second intifada.”<sup>248</sup> Mofaz, with broad support from the IDF, adopted a decisive, kinetic-force approach to insurgency suppression, in direct opposition to perceived policy waffling on the part of the PM and government.<sup>249</sup> This established a dangerous precedent, indicating a movement afoot seeking the wholesale transfer of national strategy determination to the armed forces. The resulting, de facto abdication of policy control from civilian to military sphere gave rise to questions over the government’s ability to rein in an increasingly impetuous CGS.<sup>250</sup>

By early 2001, Ehud Barak was handily defeated by the right wing, former General/DEFMIN Ariel Sharon. In the wake of the now defunct peace process, and rising Intifada-related violence, many assumed the rift between government and IDF would be healed with Sharon’s rise to power. In a move complicating matters, however, the new PM separated the DEFMIN portfolio from his own, appointing a full time keeper of the position (in the person of Binyamin Ben-Eliezer). Rather than contributing to a smoothing over of differences, the move served to exacerbate tensions with the outgoing, now overtly political Mofaz.<sup>251</sup> With the Israeli government sphere accepting CGS security policy recommendations cart blanche, Mofaz understood the enormity of the

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<sup>248</sup> Peri, “The Political-military Complex,” 333–334. The bases of this shift were: 1) a lack of trust in Arafat as a legitimate negotiating partner and 2) a desire to avoid repeating the same mistake (i.e., failure to act swiftly and definitively), which had hamstrung efforts during the 1<sup>st</sup> Intifada.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 334. According to Peri, the mindset adopted by the IDF was that it “intends to win in this confrontation, and it was unwilling to allow the political branch, with the latter’s conflicting directives...to diminish the military’s victory.

<sup>250</sup> Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, 103–107. With wide latitude to conduct operations, coupled with a limited ability/desire by Barak to exert control, Mofaz became increasingly brash in his actions. This ranged from verbal altercations to media “leaks” to the increasingly brutal measures used to crack down on Palestinians. While outright insubordination was never exhibited, it was clear that the IDF was in a position to apply government policies as it saw fit (i.e., according to its own interpretation). In time, Foreign Minister (FORMIN) Ben-Ami asserted “Barak’s breadth of control over the chief of staff is very problematic. Mofaz did whatever he wanted, and Barak did not put him in his place.”

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 114–115. According to Peri, Ben-Eliezer was one of few Defense Ministers who neither held a senior command nor had the respect of IDF leadership. He found himself in the un-admirable position of being squeezed between a very “hands-on” Prime Minister, reknown for his military exploits, and a highly political CGS determined to extract as much political influence as possible.

influence he wielded, and began preparing for a post-military career in politics.<sup>252</sup> Continuing to believe that his higher goal was to the people of Israel (as a “public servant”), the CGS’s public outbursts and unauthorized media releases repeatedly drew the ire of multiple sectors within elected government.<sup>253</sup> Unfortunately, Sharon was hampered in much the same way as his predecessor, forced to walk a fine line between U.S. pressure to engage in peace negotiations and the political/operational autonomy of the IDF’s leadership in fighting a LIC.

#### D. THE EVOLUTION OF THE CIVIL-MILITARY DYNAMIC (2003–PRESENT)

By early 2003, the cabinet situation (and by extension, the civil-military relationship) was altered again with the arrival of a new DEFMIN and CGS. Moshe Ya’alon, an outspoken critic of Arafat and the PA, assumed the mantle of CGS in June 2002. While less politically inclined than his predecessor, the new CGS was fervent in his desire finally to be rid of Arafat, and equally willing to vocalize criticisms against his own government’s policies when necessary.<sup>254</sup> According to Peri, “Ya’alon behaved according to the perception...that the CGS had not only the right, but also the authority to be a full partner in fashioning national security.”<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, 119–122. Peri provides a detailed perspective on the negative, consensus view of Shaul Mofaz as a military extension of the political branch.

<sup>253</sup> Bar-Or, “Political-military Relations in Israel, 1996–2003,” 372–374; Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, 114–116. Mofaz neither understood nor accepted the concept that the power of his position was derived purely from government appointment, not as a “public servant” (a perspective continued by his successors). While his ultimate responsibility was to the elected government, he took it upon himself to overstep boundaries at will, locking horns with anyone who crossed his path and was deemed a threat (at various times to include the PM, DEFMIN, FORMIN, etc.). By the end of his tenure, he was universally criticized (and reviled) for exercising too prominent a role in the political domain.

<sup>254</sup> Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, 137–153. The new CGS was extremely pragmatic and brutally honest, viewing issues strictly from a security perspective. He opposed the withdrawal from Lebanon, and was particularly noted for using decisive measures to subdue protests and insurrection. Ya’alon saw Arafat as the root cause of the most recent uprising; yet disagreed with the manner in which several security measures were determined. This included: 1) poor planning/implementation of the security “fence,” 2) the lack of diplomatic overtures to Syria, and 3) the Sharon government’s unwillingness to offer “carrots” in addition to “sticks.” All these bred resentment among right wing parties, ultimately tarring him as a friend of the Palestinians.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 138. As was the IDF norm, Ya’alon believed himself to be “the CGS of the people of Israel, and not just of the political echelon.”

January 2003's elections further muddled the internal dynamic, when Shaul Mofaz (the outgoing CGS) made the abrupt "parachute" to DEFMIN.<sup>256</sup> While the initial interrelationship between the triad was close early in Sharon's second term, it gradually widened over time, the result of personality *and* professional differences. Mofaz had expected his new position would be akin to a "super-CGS," with de facto control over the IDF in line with his recent authority level. It was not until his civilian transition that the DEFMIN's lack of influence became glaringly apparent to him, as both PM and CGS jealously guarded their own particular fiefdoms.

The widening policy rift between Sharon and Ya'alon reached the point (in early 2005) where the latter's term was not extended (essentially "fired"), in favor of a candidate who was both politically connected to the Prime minister *and* loyal enough to accomplish his policy bidding.<sup>257</sup> Sharon, thereby, circumvented a politically weak Mofaz, bypassing several more senior officers, and in Dan Halutz, an acceptable nominee was found. The new CGS was willing to implement the Prime Minister's policy for withdrawal from Gaza, and undertook a much needed streamlining of the IDF. Upon an unexpected national leadership change in early 2006 (a function of Sharon's medical incapacitation), however, Halutz was presented with a new administration (PM and DEFMIN) sorely lacking in both policy and military experience.<sup>258</sup> Following the failed 2006 Israeli incursion into Lebanon, the lion's share of the blame was reserved for the

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<sup>256</sup> Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, 132–134. PM Sharon chose the hard-line Mofaz as a means of withstanding an internal LIKUD party challenge from Netanyahu. Mofaz's quick shift from military to political life (less than what was considered the normal/appropriate "cooling off" period) only reinforced what many had long surmised about his true goal.

<sup>257</sup> Anshel Pfeffer, "A Hierarchy Gone Awry," *The Jerusalem Post*, January 18, 2007, 3 <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1167467757401&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull> (accessed May 25, 2009). This demonstrated 1) a weakness in the appointment process, whereby politics typically drove the selection of senior military postings, and 2) an inherent connection between the two spheres.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.; Harry de Quetteville "A Most Uncompromising General," *The Daily Telegraph* (London) July 26, 2006, sec. News; Middle East Conflict, 12 .Neither Ehud Olmert (as PM) nor Amir Peretz (as DEFMIN) had appreciable military experience and, as policy and strategy neophytes, Halutz was left with no clear sense of direction from the government sphere.

CGS. Halutz was faulted not only for poor planning and strategy on the part of the IDF, but also not taking a more proactive role in warning the political leadership of potential shortcomings with military training and readiness.<sup>259</sup>

Within months, both DEFMIN Peretz and CGS Mofaz resigned their positions, with highly regarded replacements found in former PM Ehud Barak and Gabi Ashkenazi, respectively. While the first two years for both men has been dedicated to restoring the IDF's deterrent capability, it has also been marked alternatively by successful combat operations (the CAST LEAD Gaza incursion) and continued political wrangling over senior IDF appointments (the latter demonstrating continued challenges in the delineation of roles and responsibilities).<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Yaakov Katz, "Halutz Acted 'Impulsively' Misled Cabinet Committee: Other Generals should have alerted Ministers about Deficiencies in Training and Readiness," *The Jerusalem Post*, May 1, 2007, 2; Pfeffer, "A Hierarchy Gone Awry," 3; de Quetteville, "A Most Uncompromising General," 12. Ever impulsive, and ill-concerned with the ramifications of operationally incurred collateral damage (i.e., casualties and physical destruction), Halutz was faulted for using excessive/indiscriminate force and insufficient planning during the 2006 Lebanon campaign. Rather than presenting civilian leadership with a range of possible courses of action, the Israeli system provided for a "final version" for consideration only. This proved disastrous when the combination of 1) a poorly formulated, risk/casualty-averse government strategy was coupled with, 2) the CGS's emphasis on technologically-based, stand-off warfare. Cumulatively, these proved wholly ineffective in combating Hezbollah's asymmetric threat, ultimately perpetuating deterioration in IDF deterrence.

<sup>260</sup> Amos Harel, "Barak-Ashkenazi Clash Postpones IDF Appointments," May 22, 2009, *Ha'aretz* <http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasen/spages/1087461.html> (accessed June 3, 2009), 1–2.

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## VII. CONCLUSION

As the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century approaches its conclusion, fully understanding Israeli civil-military relations remains vital in efforts to attain comprehensive peace in a region plagued by decades of inter and intra state violence. While there has been a propensity to examine Israel's regional status and policy formulation/implementation solely in terms of external factors, in reality, it is the interaction of three domestic components (politics, population and economics), which exert the preponderance of influence on the relationship between civilian and military spheres. Each are influenced by regional and global factors, which further impacts the inter-sphere dynamic, gradually altering it over time.

Rather than succumbing to the debilitating effects of intractable conflict, the Jewish state continues to thrive in the face of adversity, resisting devolution into Lasswell's predicted "garrison state" model. This has been a function of not only a democratic process, but also the hybrid interaction between civilian and military domains, where inherently blurred and fragmented boundaries enable rapid response to strategic and operational threats. There are those who consider such connections as, 1) broadly inefficient and 2) antithetical to traditional civil-military relations, where the presence of functional democracy is indicated by integral boundaries. That said, newer/constructionist theories seek to explain this unique dynamic through the study of societal-specific variables (to include history, culture, geography, etc.), opining that there is no single right answer to the needs of a particular state. Only when external actors are able to rationalize, come to terms with, and harness the micro-level conduct of Israel's decision making process will improved regional coordination become possible.

The purpose of this conclusion is to reiterate key findings articulated within the study, clearly establishing their relevance in the case of Israeli civil-military relations. The principle takeaway is that historical, cultural and economic factors do play a paramount role in country-specific development and that generalizations based on traditional theories are, 1) not always wholly appropriate and 2) require revisiting and

reassessment over time. As additionally noted, by examining long-term data it does appear that specific trends can be extrapolated. First, Israel remains a pluralistic democracy challenged by ongoing conflict. Second, Israel's development was explicitly influenced by its security dilemma. Third, Israel continues to rely on a uniquely hybrid arrangement whereby civil and military spheres function as a de facto partnership. Finally, continued Westernization and Globalization will directly impact the character of its security establishment (to include its larger role within society).

It should be noted that there are strong theoretical opinions on both sides of the aisle among scholars, with no inherently “right” answer to the Israeli case. Each attempts to reconcile the unique nature of Israel’s civil-military relationship as defined by security considerations. Perspectives are often colored by the timeframe in which study was undertaken, or by the inherent bias of a particular model. Most effectively, Moshe Lissak summarizes the general dilemma in his five paradoxes.

- First: While the IDF maintains a position of centrality in Israel, it is not the most important factor.
- Second: While the military is actively involved in security related policy making, Israel remains a thriving democracy.
- Third: While there is a certain amount of political involvement in senior IDF appointments, by and large, promotion is based on leadership and performance.
- Fourth: While the military is certainly a key interest group, it remains but one among several.
- Fifth: Despite fragmentation and permeability between the civil and military spheres, the latter has inherently remained subordinate to the former.<sup>261</sup>

These provide an adequate summation of the dichotomy regularly experienced by those studying or interacting with Israel at an official level.

In so far as the definitions initially articulated are concerned, the following can be demonstrated.

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<sup>261</sup> Moshe Lissak, “Paradoxes of Israeli Civil-military Relations: An Introduction,” in *Israeli Society and Its Defense Establishment: The Social and Political Impact of a Protracted Violent Conflict*, ed. Moshe Lissak (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1984), 1–8.

- **The military:** The IDF is a highly organized, efficient, and respected entity. While the organization remains officially subordinate to the civilian government, it continues to demonstrate an unusual level of influence over the process of policy formulation and implementation.<sup>262</sup> This is largely a function of its emergence as an epistemic authority on issues relating to defense and security, whereby it has assumed the role as recognized expert relative to civilian government.
- **Professionalism:** Despite initial reliance on a nation-in-arms construct, the Israeli armed forces have gradually transitioned to a more professional model over the past 20 years. This is a function of declining threats and budgets, which necessitated a role contraction from involvement in civilian-related matters (i.e., education, medical care, and infrastructure projects, etc.).
- **Militarism:** There are clearly dissenting opinions on the issue whereas Israel is concerned. Uri Ben-Eliezer, Yoram Peri and Giora Goldberg indicate that Israel fits the criteria to be considered militaristic. According to the former, military considerations take precedence over civil matters, and have since the state's inception.<sup>263</sup> Additionally, the unique connection between the IDF and society feeds into the nation-in-arms concept, which is “used by the political and military elites to provide justification for political problems and to mobilize the entire population for war.”<sup>264</sup> Goldberg agrees that militarism encroaches into Israel’s political system, but that it is not inherently fatal to the state’s democratic legacy.<sup>265</sup> Conversely, Moshe Lissak, Stuart Cohen, and Sucharov all challenge the notion that Israel is a militaristic society. Lissak maintains that such a characterization requires the state to have an offensive/expansionist culture, and that the military needs be the central

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<sup>262</sup> Michael, “The Dilemma behind the Classical Dilemma of Civil--Military Relations,” 520. “The Israeli case demonstrates the unique situation where the military, deeply involved in the political process, influences both the political echelon and the public by its knowledge and persuasive argumentation, and still obeys the political echelon.”

<sup>263</sup> Yoram Peri, “The Political-military Complex,” 328. Peri concurs, stating, “the Israeli case...was not a case of the military’s civilianization, but rather of civil society’s militarization at the hand of the political elite and the state’s apparatus.”

<sup>264</sup> Lissak, “The Unique Approach to Military-societal Relations in Israel,” 245. Ben Eliezer compares the Israeli model to that of Imperial Japan, Prussia and Czarist Russia.

<sup>265</sup> Goldberg, “The Growing Militarization of the Israeli Political System,” 28–29. It is her belief that, while former military officers fill a disproportionate share of political positions, their fragmented opinions and ideologies inhibit the development of a cohesive challenger to the legitimate/elected government.

focus and guiding element of society.<sup>266</sup> He further indicates that, 1) militarism in certain aspects of society should not imply the entire model is militaristic and 2) the pluralistic nature of the Israeli system mitigates any potential for such an extreme position.<sup>267</sup>

- **Boundaries/Separation/Permeability:** The Israeli civil-military relationship has developed out of a fragmented boundary model, where convergence between the two domains has become the norm (vice the exception). Unlike Western arrangements, there is a lack of integral boundaries, whereby exchange can occur in both directions.<sup>268</sup> According to Lissak, this “prevented the military from becoming a separate caste which feels itself alienated from, and in conflict with, the values represented by the civilian elites.”<sup>269</sup>
- **Linkages:** Related to the issue of fragmented boundaries, linkages and points of contact between civil and military spheres remain broadly based and patently intact. According to Etzioni-Halevy, insubordination is rare, but the following five results are demonstrated: 1) military advocacy/challenge of government policy through media channels, 2) IDF involvement in policy formation via participation in cabinet meetings and negotiations with foreign actors, 3) party/political appointments (recruiting) of senior military officers based on similar policy perspectives, whereby government policy is self-perpetuating, 4) the parachuting from one pyramid to another (i.e., military to civilian) is a

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<sup>266</sup> Lissak, “The Unique Approach to Military-societal Relations in Israel,” 246–247; Lissak, “A Militaristic Society or a Democracy in Uniform,” 419. While the former is certainly questionable in the Israeli case, events since the 1973 war appears to corroborate the perception that “the IDF does not wish, and could not even if it did wish, to serve as the supreme regulator of Israeli life.” This is contrasted with the examples of Imperial Japan and Prussia, where the military did play a leading role in the nature of society.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., Goldberg, “The Growing Militarization of the Israeli Political System,” 14. Regarding the former, Lissak states that “even if a certain degree of ‘militarization’ does exist in one area, this does not imply significant penetration into another,” providing the blurring of boundaries in WWII America as a comparative example. Whereas the latter is concerned, a lack of clear consensus can be demonstrated within the IDF itself. “IDF General Staff and senior officers rarely formulate a unified position on any substantive military-strategic issue,” and that “retired officers who go into politics are found at almost every shade of the spectrum.”

<sup>268</sup> Etzioni-Halevy, “Civil-military Relations and Democracy: The Case of Military-political Elites’ Connection in Israel,” 401–404; Lissak, “The Unique Approach to Military-societal Relations in Israel,” 244; Lissak, “A Militaristic Society or a Democracy in Uniform,” 428; Stuart A. Cohen, “Changing Civil-military Relations in Israel,” 769. Etzioni-Halevy opines, “Israel lacks the separation between the government/political elite and the military elite...commonly found in Western democracies.” This is reiterated by Stuart Cohen, who states “the degree of overall influence wielded by the Israel Defense Force (IDF) exceeds the boundaries that democracies generally consider appropriate.”

<sup>269</sup> Lissak, “A Militaristic Society or a Democracy in Uniform,” 429.

mobility channel for IDF leadership, and 5) close social relations between the domains due to common experiences and the small size of Israeli society.<sup>270</sup>

- **Nation-in-arms:** Israel's founding fathers instituted a universal conscription model to: 1) maximize available resources, 2) mitigate detrimental impacts on the economy, and 3) incorporate the military as a social bonding agent. Based on a tier model, relying on professionals, conscripts and reservists, this role expansion was very indicative of Israel's formative years. It was effective in creating both strong military and viable state, propelling Israel into regional hegemony. In recent years, decreased military threats, budget constraints and changes in attitude have facilitated a role contraction.<sup>271</sup> While it is unlikely that the IDF will ever be completely divorced from its reliance on conscription, the move toward increasing professionalization poses potential ramifications for civil-military relations, as the latter has the potential for turning inward as a solitary actor.

As the Cold War came to a close in the early 1990s, Israel experienced a decrease in direct military threat, offset by the rise of asymmetric and long-range challenges. The latter inherently implied/required a more nuanced political approach, as the direct application of conventional force had not only proven less than effective, but also further widened the gulf between civilian and security domains. While IDF leaders have seen the continued waning of their budgets as a percentage of GDP, this belies the fact that spending (in real terms) has continued to accelerate (a function of economic growth). Additionally, the time period from Israel's founding through the early 1990s was marked de facto military influence over *broadly defined* security matters, with the civilian government lacking the infrastructure in which to counterbalance the armed forces effectively. Unlike the early years, when personal will, custom and tradition were enough to subordinate the IDF, Israel's increasingly professionalized military and fragmented

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<sup>270</sup> Etzioni-Halevy, "Civil-military Relations and Democracy: The Case of Military-political Elites' Connection in Israel," 401–409; Heper and Itzkowitz-Shiffrinson, "Civil-military Relations in Israel and Turkey," 235.

<sup>271</sup> Goldberg, "The Growing Militarization of the Israeli Political System," 15. "These expressions of military role expansion in Israel reached their peak at the end of the seventies but since then an opposite trend is taking place...a general trend is recognized of a reduction in the IDF's role at the institutional level...the reduction process—despite being in its infancy...is expanding."

political system have contributed to a unique civil-military environment. The cumulative effect of military, political, cultural and economic factors unleashed as early as 1967 continued to resonate even today.

While it is unclear what the future holds in store for the stability of this Israel's civil-military dynamic, recent history would appear to indicate the system remains functional (if imperfect). The Israeli model manifests a recurring struggle for political power and control, and is marked by "the army's growing influence over government decision making in security matters, and the government's attempt to narrow the senior command's influence on its decisions."<sup>272</sup> This adhoc/hybrid arrangement continues to demonstrate civilian reliance on military input and expertise to formulate security strategy and policy. According to Yoram Peri, since at least the early 1990s "a picture emerged of an IDF with its own clear vision for the middle East, a view that the IDF encouraged successive Israeli governments to adopt."<sup>273</sup> That said, while personality differences and political posturing have often affected the nature of the civil-military relationship (typically a function of issues relating to peace and security), there has never been an overt or expressed desire by IDF leadership to subsume control from their elected government. Rather, de jure superiority continues to remain in civilian hands and will likely remain so for the foreseeable future.

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<sup>272</sup> Bar-Or, "Political-military Relations in Israel, 1996–2003," 374.

<sup>273</sup> Peri, *Generals in the Cabinet Room*, 9.

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